GENOA, PISA, AND FLORENCE.

SKETCHES

OF

GENOA, PISA, AND FLORENCE;

WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE

CATHEDRAL OF MILAN.

Translated from the French of Jules Janin,

BY

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PHILADELPHIA:
LIPPINCOTT, GRAMBO, AND CO.
1854.

PREFACE.

THE following *Sketches* are selected from M. Janin's *Voyage en Italie.* The interest of this fair land, so endowed by nature and so enriched by art, is one which can neither be impaired by time nor exhausted by description. The chaplet of glory which crowns her is but the more hallowed with each succeeding century, while the *chefs-d'œuvre* that compose it, though too dazzling for competition, are still the beacon to animate and encourage dormant genius, and illumine the steep pathway which ascends to immortality.

The brilliant French writer, whose first impressions of Italy I have ventured to Anglicize, presents them in an original and picturesque style.

I cannot hope to have successfully reflected the rich hues of M. Janin's imagination, but simply that the shadow may not grow so dim and colorless as to be void of outline.

M. H. R.

CONTENTS.

GENOA.

Of all the cities bathed by the Italian sea, Genoa is incontrovertibly the most beautiful. She leans proudly against the Apennines—at her marble feet softly murmur the waves of Liguria, that fair sea which has been traversed by all classic antiquity in such diversified apparel and for causes so various. Two mountains, of man's construction, shelter the port, crowded with ships of every nation. At the same instant with ourselves, entered in full sail, a superb English vessel, which was saluted by the Genoese cannon, and returned the courtesy. To-morrow we propose to view the town from the lofty deck of the English frigate, majestically reposing in the waters, which she seems to command.

This collection of palaces entitled *Genoa*, is incredible to all but the beholder. For two days, I have minutely examined this superb city, whose heart no longer beats, whose head is cold, which

yet lives and moves, even with that inanimate, trunkless frame, such strength and vitality do its marble entrails still maintain; within the circumference, in effect, are two towns, life and death side by side. On the borders of the sea, in the port, at the foot of the city, you find activity, motion, noise, a crowd—in a word, life, such as comports with Italian nations, inhabited ruins, a busy, intelligent, commercial population; but, ascend higher, perambulate the streets, whose broad, hollow flags resound beneath your footsteps, enter, through porticos open to every storm, the splendid palaces inhabited by silence; cast your eyes upon the drapery of the depopulated saloons waving in the wind like funeral-hangings; look upward and contemplate the solemn arches, whose echo once sang only verses of love; recline against the lofty windows, which, of yore, lent their nocturnal light to so many beauties forever vanished, which have listened to countless serenades now lost in the air; hearken to this deep silence, explore this desert for the last vestiges of annihilated grandeur, and say if even Jeremiah's lament over the cities doomed to perish, though replete with mournful energy, falls not below the level of this desolation!

Genoa, the speck of earth before us, so adorned and so sad, humble, yet embellished with such *chefs-d'œuvre!* how diverse have been her fortunes! The Romans have been there in turn, as they have been everywhere, bearing civilization and order in their train of conquest; the Eastern emperors have been masters there; then, like a tempest, came the barbarians, those universal incendiaries; then Charlemagne, the universal reconstructor; and then, eager with haste, the Moors, the accomplished barbarians, the finished masters of politeness, literature, gallantry, and courage. On this corner of earth have Guelphs and Ghibelins fought to desperation, after the pattern of the civil wars obtained from the heroes of Florence; afterwards, the Pisans and Venitians coveted the port open to their adventures, and disputed it, the last as merchants, the first as gentlemen; then France repaired to the succor of the town rent by factions; and finally came Doria, who made it a republic.

Meanwhile, there is a memorable day in the history of this city and in that of the universe, when a man, without name or credit, a poor, obscure, despised Genoese, departed to return with a world more, which he had discovered. Singu-

lar, intelligent little nook, where are associated the names of Louis XII., Christopher Columbus, and Doria! Review such a town, if you can, without emotions of pity and respect! Like the capitol, Genoa was built for eternity. While obeying her Doges, verily the republic sheltered worthily these monarchs of a day, for, within this narrow compass, are palaces meet for kings as Doges. These merchants loved the fine arts as nobles, and paid for them like kings. It is thus that the greatest artists of the sixteenth Italian century, which is probably the most glorious era of human genius, crowded to Genoa, understanding that, on the shores of that sea so dear to poets, there lived a people of rich Athenians, employed in constructing a town of marble and gold. At this tidings, the most illustrious painters, the most celebrated sculptors, and especially the greatest architects of the world, abandoned their work commenced, to go to embellish the rival of Venice, the *terra-firma* Venice, more free, and not less fair, governed by rich merchants sprung from the people; the Venice without spies or informers, executioners, state-prisons, and courtisans; the pure, innocent, busy, liberal Venice, covered with shade, surrounded with orange-groves and flowers. Nor

has Italian art alone come hither to lavish its adorable miracles on this sea-coast; France, the East, the Indies, Spain, even the New World, have been put under contribution to found, erect, ornament, and furnish these royal abodes.

Shall we commence with the public palace in this town of palaces? *Je le veux bien*, though there is scarce a preference. And yet, as a specimen, what a marvel the ducal palace is; though ruined, insulted, squandered as the implacable, stupid violence of revolutions have left it, as they ever have, in all places. The ascent is by a magnificent marble stairway, leaving on the right the pedestal on which was the statue of Doria, wickedly broken in an *emeute*. An immense vestibule, sustained by eighty columns of solid marble, conducts to a grand staircase, divided into spacious flights ushering into the council-chamber, and within this great hall, beneath these bold, self-supported vaults, through an admirable suite of columns and pilasters, in niches dug in the wall, stands a nation of severe statues. Is it illusion? The mantles of these statues seem agitated by the wind; we might imagine these shrouds had been washed on yester evening? What, then, is this animated, waving marble, that the breeze arranges

with such varied, capricious grace, around these heroes? Nothing, however, can be more real; these statues, fully clad and equipped, which represent the great men of the republic, her legislators, poets, artists, and soldiers, were broken by the populace in one of those impulses of furious rage (*delirium tremens*) which incites multitudes to destroy everything in their passage. Juvenal has, somewhere, aptly said, "They crush in wrath what they have worshipped with awe." These are to nations as to individuals, hours of mental malady, and then woe to all species of glory, to virtue, centuries of antiquity, to creeds, or grandeur, that fall beneath the hands of the furious zealots. Thus the people of Genoa have broken the images of their great men, as far as possible, insulted, disfigured, and mutilated them; they dashed in pieces the casque and cuirass, rent the toga and ermine, shivered the wand and sword, effaced the name and escutcheon, despoiled the sacred monuments of their sovereign insignia; leaving them in this state without respect or pity, not reflecting that they thus deprived history of all that made it holy, majestic, and venerable. Insensate, ungrateful people! But their rage is vain; it can only break, it can annihilate nothing,

above all, glory. Such is man's power, that, what he has himself made, he is impotent to destroy. He may create, he cannot obliterate. Behold a temple he has overthrown; he thinks to subvert a structure, but he creates a ruin. He would banish history, and founds poetry instead. It is thus that, scarcely were they broken, ere these venerable images of illustrious Genoese have been immediately re-established; the statues, assassinated at evening, are on the morrow remounted on their bases, as did that of the commander on his tomb; only, as the sculptor was no longer there to impart life, a third time, to these assassinated great men, a pious, intelligent hand, has gathered dust from dust; formless clay has replaced the wrought marble of genius; over it they have thrown funeral mantles, and those severed heads have been substituted by deceptive effigies. Thus, every hero is remodelled by a little clay, skilfully arranged. And yet, to see them again assembled in that council-chamber which they once inhabited, the effect on the imagination is undiminished, respect has not been scattered to the winds, like the dust of the broken marble. After all, what imports it that this clay be more or less fashioned! Not the representation of the man

makes the statue revered, but his name. Therefore, this hall of council has lost nothing by such profanation. I love these phantoms of statues not less than the originals, which, when extant, were themselves but phantoms of heroes of other days. Among relics of past times, there are some of slight significance, such as the fragment of a Carthaginian barque, the stones of a Venitian castle, brought by Genoese from Constantinople, a chain captured from the Pisans, a bronze table, which has no other signification than a judgment of Roman consuls in favor of Genoa, and other petty vanities. These Italian towns are proud in their poverty. Having ceased to be rich and glorious, they desire to preserve their nobility; and, especially tenacious of maintaining the antiquity of their origin, heap up to that effect all kinds of fragments, marble, bronze, and paper. After the ducal palace, the abode of the vanished supremacy of the Genoese, we shall visit the *hotel of the poor*, which is much richer even than that. Three great architects have reared this house, the luxury of whose arrangements is incredible. It contains a beautiful Christ of Michael Angelo, reposing in the arms of the blessed Virgin, an admirable piece of marble. The high altar is in the complete

style of Pierre Puget, the French Michael Angelo; here the Virgin, who before sustained Christ, is herself supported by angels bearing her to the skies. What beautiful infants wafted upon their light wings! What a holy, pure, calm, charming Virgin! How much grace and strength combined in that happy group flying towards heaven, bearing the mother of the Saviour, the Angel without wings! Pierre Puget is assuredly the greatest artist France has produced; Genoa abounds in his works. Doubtless, the Genoese, with a marvellous instinct in which Louis XIV. was deficient, were the first to divine their noble neighbor, the statuary of Marseilles, for they possess more *chefs-d'œuvre* of Puget than the palace of Versailles contains. Compare them, if you be so bold, these beauteous angels of Puget with the chubby faces of both sexes, which in reality are of no sex, in the church of St. Lawrence, that Canova calls angels! Within this house, or rather palace of the poor, all is silence, freshness, beauty, repose, and murmur. Over that exquisite chapel, full of marvels, open the dormitories of the happy paupers, the veritably sovereign masters of all this magnificence. The indigent, not admitted within the sanctuary, receive daily food and winter vest-

ments at the door; a true Italian benevolence, improvident and unlimited, a charity more fatal than useful, a Christian nursery of mendicant and philanthropist, two scourges which cultivate and nourish each other. In a well-constituted government, little encouragement should be extended to these charitable men, who devote themselves to the indiscriminate maintenance of all the idle who solicit alms. They are infinitely more dangerous than those of ambitious pursuits or covetous of glory. Commend me to ambition for promoting national interests! The ambitious man sheds around him all kinds of useful passions and new ideas; he is active, persevering, laborious, and intelligent, divines every available avenue of knowledge, rears his children with scrupulous care, perfectly conscious that his career is replete with perils to be avoided, dangers to be foreseen. The ambitious aspirant is the king of the future, while the benevolent man, on the contrary, exercises, for his own comfort, the easiest of all virtues and the most insignificant, charity. He sows his alms at random, to reap mendicants; reposes in that facile virtue which consists in bestowing the remains of his bread on those unwilling to gain it; and, destitute of foresight or precaution, trains

his children to imitate their father, in thus indiscriminately lavishing the embarrassing superfluity of their fortune. Around such a man industry languishes, the laborious are discouraged, and consider it folly to toil amid so many, living without effort. A wise government, if desirous to advance, should mistrust charity far more than ambition. But this will ever be incomprehensible to the Italians. To give alms as they practise it, is a profession of the indolent; to be really ambitious, would be to them the labor of heroes, to remove the pillars of Hercules. You may imagine if the poor are thus lodged in marble and gold, neither of these, nor rare paintings, are wanting in the churches; and, in effect, the like admirable profusion exists in all the churches of Genoa. I have examined them generally, and in these well-preserved temples, on the flags covered with escutcheons, in presence of *chefs-d'œuvre* of all the arts, in an atmosphere fragrant and balmy with flowers, under vaults glittering with graceful imagery relieved with gold, on which light breaks in colored reflections through Gothic windows, at the foot of marble altars, where taper and incense burn unceasingly, and which are never without prayer, I have comprehended, for the first time,

that perpetual admiration, that continual impulse to devotion, which constitutes the most lively, indestructible passion of Italy. Admiration is fatiguing, without doubt; but how shall I suppress it, how refrain from expressing my boundless enthusiasm? And when they say to me, "Beware! moderate your emotion; how will it be when before St. Peter's at Rome?" I know not; but, meanwhile, it is impossible for me not to bend the knee in the Church of the Annunciation.

And how it elucidates what we before deemed ourselves perfectly cognizant of; to pass to and fro under this beautilful sky, to tread the happy earth, to enter freely beneath these arched vaults and salute such works of genius; to behold, compare, touch them, and inquire, where has life passed, unblessed by the enjoyment of these countless wonders? Repeatedly, they say to me, "Thou dreamest, happy man;" and verily a fair vision. They believe me returned to the impassioned enchantments of early youth, when all is love, poetry, enthusiasm, and admiration; the bird that sings in the tree, waving its foliage in the air, the breeze rising to meet the sun, the humming insect floating over nature, the wave with its glitter, its freshness, and murmur. It is in youth that we admire the

grass, flowers, stars, sky, the pale scintillating light of August evening; but it is for maturer years to appreciate marble, pictures, palaces, ruins, *chefs-d'œuvre*, all the scattered beauties cast by antiquity on the Christian world, which the Middle Age has bequeathed to the modern. What is the admiration of twenty years? A rose withering on a mistress's bosom. Ten years later, it is a fragment of brown marble under a Grecian sun, the verse of a poet, one of those thousand rays that time has disdained to remove with the end of that scythe, which is at once a crotchet and a sword. And then, to comprehend finally the power of times that are no more, what modesty it induces! To survey the vast theatre of such dramas and poems, histories and visions, how it enlightens studies in which imaginary proficiency had been attained!

In effect, since arriving in this highly-favored land, our admired prose-writers, Tacitus and Titus-Livius; our favorite poets, Horace and Virgil, have emitted a sudden, vivid light before unimagined; while the towns encompassed by ruined trenches, the crumbling edifices whose tower yet remains, elucidate the civil wars and bloody conflicts of Italy. In these charming fields, watered by numberless little brooks, in the green pastures

where the great oxen of the Georgics ruminated, I understand, or rather I discover Virgil; Horace will doubtless come later, when the Tiber is before me; Naples will illustrate Ovid and the imperial voluptuousness; so with Dante in traversing the streets of Florence. Behold, then, a new world opening before me, a world of poetry and fairy-land! And I, insensate that I was, hesitated to depart!

Moreover, I could never before comprehend that oft-repeated reply of the Doge, when forced by the insolence of Louis XIV. to repair from Genoa to Versailles, to humble the republic. Conducting the noble stranger into the gardens of the palace, upon lawns trodden by a whole century of great men, amid the sound of a thousand fountains which shot into the air at a gesture of the master, escorting him through the immense galleries and vast saloons, a universe of marble and gold, pausing continually that he might admire all those miracles newly-wrought in that barren spot, the review ending in the *salle du trone*, at the foot of the throne, erected in the most magnificent site that could have been selected in the kingdom of France, when they inquired what most astonished him at Versailles, "To see myself there," was his reply.

This response amazed the whole court of Louis XIV., being altogether incomprehensible. Historians repeat without explaining it; honest academicians, nay, M. Scribe himself, have applied the phrase, while ignorant of its meaning. To understand its sense, which is really clear and simple, though little adapted to young disciples of the French academy, it is necessary to visit Genoa, and survey her palaces. Truly, the courtiers of Versailles, in thinking to astonish the Doge of Genoa by pomp and magnificence, were ignorant of the town from whence he came. Had they known that this merchant, representing a city of merchants, had himself a palace of Versailles, that he inhabited a street filled with such, they would not have so flippantly inquired, "What most astonished you here, Monseigneur?"

And with what was this man to be astonished? A stone palace? His was of marble. Pillars of marble? He had pillars of porphyry. At columns of porphyry? His walls were of lapis-lazuli. By such architects as Mansard? His were Francis Falcona, Andrea his brother, and Charles Fontana, who erected the obelisk at Rome, and constructed more beautiful stairways than those of Versailles. Your statues were by Coybesox, his

by Puget; Lebrun was the king's painter, the Doge's was called Paul Veronese; the king's portrait was executed by Mignard, Van Dyke painted the wife, child, and dog of the Doge of Genoa.

What, then, could astonish him in all these wonders of Versailles, whose chamber was painted by Aldrovardini, of which Romanelli designed the tapestries? Who had in his employment Correggio, Titian, the two Caracci! What could astonish him, this king of a republic, who did not purchase, at random, the pictures of masters, but who, from father to son, summoned great painters and said to them: "I must have a *chef-d'œuvre* at this place!" Who thus commanded Tintoret, as had his grandfather, Albert Durer! A man that had summoned a Paul Veronese, expressly to cover a portion of the wall of his house, could aught astonish him? A garden of statues! but, around his palace were hanging-gardens like those of Babylon. Could the waters of Versailles surprise him, when an immense aqueduct cast, as it still does, an entire river through the city of Genoa? And as to the remainder of the royal splendor, what was there to astonish this good Doge, whose house contained the precious marbles of Italy, the riches of Japan and China, the perfumes of the East and mirrors

of Venice, he who, in childhood, had sat to Rubens for his picture? The more minute the examination of Genoese architecture, the more evident the force of the Doge's reply. A Genoese palace, representing a true model of an illustrious epoch, is even externally embellished with marble and paintings; the flight of steps is immense; the vestibule adorned with statues; through a long suit of antique busts, you reach the vast doors, which open spontaneously, and thus, unobstructed, may penetrate into the resplendent ruins. Then, is presented to view all that grandeur which so many revolutions have been powerless to annihilate. Enter, the saloons are open, the table is still arranged for the feast of Banquo; only, the places are vacant. Advance fearlessly, silence is the solitary inhabitant of these abodes, echo alone is startled by your footsteps, and yet what involuntary respect is excited beneath these high and sonorous vaults! In effect, it is that a whole century of splendor and glory has left, within the walls, the unobliterated traces of its passage. The century is dead, but its abode is unchanged. Ask not where are the tombs, while the palaces remain! Thus, amid marshes, and surrounded with brambles, might be the palace of the Queen that slept

for a hundred years. In that of the Genoese, all things are in place, as if the master and family were about to reawake suddenly from their long sleep. The ante-chamber awaits the valets, insolent and armed to the teeth, as in the Romeo of Shakspeare. The inner cabinet is full of papers and books of the master, and a glance informs you that Dante has spoken, Columbus departed, that Galileo is released by the Holy Office. Enter that solemn chamber, still furnished with its garniture of ivory and ebony. Venice has sent thither her hangings and her mirrors, her gilt leather and pictures; the nuptial couch is canopied, the toilet arranged, even the remnant of paint is there, wherewith the dead have decked themselves in festal hours. Proceed onward in this abode of silence; all is in order; here, the cradle of the infant, the sword of the young man, the cuirass of the captain, the arm-chair of the sire;—their portraits regard you, passing with head uncovered, in reverence for these living generations. Again, folding doors open wide, to admit you, the guests of an hour. Now, behold the rich saloons, wherein the sixteenth century has lavished all its magnificence.

Great names and mighty passions have garnished these halls; the passions are vanished, the

names nearly forgotten; the ball-lustres wave as at the last *fête;* the velvet seats await the dancers. Silence! jewelled youth approaches; in the adjacent banquet-hall, at that long table, covered with glass, bronze, silver, and gold, guests are about to sit. Meantime, more distant cabinets are open for political converse; the chapel is ready for prayer; the theatre invites; vast kitchens await but a little fire in their furnaces; high above, in a carved balcony, musicians are expected, and, reflected by the brilliant mirrors, you will shortly see gliding, the beautiful Italians, with black eyes sparkling on the pure, transparent cheek. How delightful, if amid this silence could he heard the Romanesca, drawn from oblivion by the violin of Baillot!

Thus constructed, redundantly ornamented and furnished, are all these deserted palaces. The proprietor himself opens the door to you, being rather the guardian than master, and, ruined as he is, would deem himself dishonored in wresting a single picture from the rich walls, or in selling a solitary article of his magnificent apartments. Such a man possesses pictures of a million in value, who, for ten years, has not donned a new hat. All these palaces, thus held sacred, are public. The visitor may boldly enter, for they are

filled with *chefs-d'œuvre* only. If by chance one be inhabited, fear not to enter; the master will retreat, his wife and daughter give place to you, conscious, these hospitable gentlemen, that not to themselves alone belongs the enjoyment of all these miracles.

Finally, taking reluctant leave of this sombre magnificence, of the admirable street, Bulbi and Neuve, with its noble *façade* designed by Rubens, a collection of which he published at Venice, then, ascending the ramparts, reach the port through those formidable batteries of cannon which no longer inspire fear; go, like us, in a bark towards the centre, and from that point admire the vast amphitheatre of houses, hospitals, mountains, verdure, and marble. Though we, more fortunate than you will be, were received with the most beneficent hospitality on board the fine English vessel Pembroke. Extending his hand, the commander prayed us to excuse the absence of his band, which was in the city, then exhibited to us the construction of that mighty machine, so skilful and well disciplined, with its cannons, musketry, three masts, sailors, soldiers, and hospital, where a man may die comfortably in his hammock. Meanwhile, in the distant view was Genoa, in full

outline, motionless, and resigned, absorbed by Savoy—by Savoy! And for myself, in beholding those two commercial people, the English and Genoese, face to face, the one masters of the sea, the other scarce masters of their port; the first as high in the scale of nations as the last once was, seeing a single Englishman, as it were, defying these ramparts charged with cannon, the city, once the seat of the Doges, the nation of Doria, once masters of the East, I was tempted to turn towards the English, tranquilly drinking their grog, and, pointing to that profound abasement and misery, exclaim, with Bossuet, *Erudimini*, "Be admonished, O nation of merchants!"

PISA.

We are now arrived at another Republic, which has enacted an important, though transient part among those of Italy. Pisa claims the honor of having been founded by the Greeks, and even yet preserves a kind of indescribable, Athenian perfume. She maintains, and ever will to the end of time, that she was not conquered by Rome, but voluntarily submitted to the empire. The name of Pisans is inscribed, and not ingloriously, in the Æneid, that admirable Roman genealogy. The port of Pisa was celebrated in olden times; but first the sea receded from it, and next came the barbarians, for the history is similar of all the Italian towns. At the zenith of their prosperity are seen descending upon the affrighted populations those terrible missionaries of barbarism, Alaric, Attila, Genseric, and Odoacre; blasphemy and ruin, torch and sword in their train. Then, total darkness — engulfing towns, men, laws,

usages, till the period when the first rays from the dawning liberties of Renaissance glide into that night of the Middle Age. By these glimmerings, nations imbedded in powder are discerned reviving to hope; anew, they essay strength and thought; then towns begin to emerge from their ruins; republics arise from the dust; interrupted ages recommence. And thus it is till these resuscitated communities shall be strong enough to devour each other, comprising an endless history, equally fruitful of brigands and heroes. Do not apprehend the details of that history here. I prefer that you divine it in traversing these silent streets, and deserted valleys, the country with its dismantled towers, broken battlements, destroyed ramparts, and flourishing fields; for, *Dieu merci*, verdure is eternal as the sun. Man may lay a city in ashes, but he cannot exterminate the lily of the valley, whose imperishable magnificence Solomon has celebrated. Sacrilegious mortal, who seekest, within thee, the secret of thy nothingness or grandeur, thou mayest shiver marble and bronze into fragments, but canst not dry the least spring of water in the depth of the forest! Thou mayest cast silence and death within these walls,

but not arrest a note of the matinal lark whose song salutes the sunrise!

Moreover, nothing is wholly effaced from earth; ruins are almost immortal; they constitute the sacred ashes of towns that are no more! Pisa, meantime, is not a ruin; she hovers, as it were, between life and death. She belongs to the Middle Age, without having advanced or receded. Noise and activity have abandoned her like the sea, whose roar is heard in the distance, never again to approach the walls it has forsaken. Let us then contemplate her, extended in her marble coffin, and beautiful even in death, this once warlike and commercial town, which has been the rival of Venice, the mistress of Carthage, and, in time of the Crusades, possessed her kingdom on African soil. Happy in still being protected by the works of certain great artists of which she is the mother, or was the nurse; for, had she nothing beside her quays on the Arno, her high walls and dismantled towers, and the vanished renown history has given her, Pisa were but a vain title lost in space, a far-off, echoless sound.

Fortunately, from all her past glory, the edifices she has reared, the towns she has overturned, from all her conquests and ruins, there remain to

Pisa three imperishable *chefs-d'œuvre*—the Duomo, Leaning Tower, and Campo Santo; and with such debris, a city is immortal though in ruins. And to the writer of these pages, though arriving here under the influence of the dazzling magnificence of Genoese palaces—of all that exquisite art, matchless gorgeousness, of works of genius, selected during the most splendid epoch—thus falling from the sixteenth Italian century into the thirteenth and fourteenth—this retrograde step has been far from terrific.

The mere aspect of these masses of stone instantly impressed me with awe, so replete are they with imposing majesty. In architecture, what is grand is nearly akin to the beautiful. Furthermore, in respect to art, the first efforts of genius in an awakened people bear upon them an indescribably sacred and mighty impress, which envelops them with reverence. Would a man deem it an auspicious moment to exercise the faculty of taste when at the summit of the Leaning Tower? or what imagination so expansive as to compose a petty critique beneath the Duomo? or calculate the stones of the Cemetery? Respect and feeling are sufficient, to estimate properly these bold monuments of past ages. Thus, in all humi-

lity is it that I have studied in broad detail these three great works of art; and even yet I see them in my heart of heart, mirrored as in a camera obscura. The three monuments occupy a site in front of the town, in a vast space which they completely fill with their magnitude and shadow, indebted to no profane edifice for shade. The Duomo, Tower, and Cemetery, form a single work, the varied cantos of one and the same epic and Christian poem, very aptly comparable to the *Divina Commedia*, for it is none other than Dante who inspired these beautiful pages—here, life—there, death—above, heaven—below, the tomb; between these two monuments, so diverse, that high, ever-crumbling tower, and the Campo Santo, devoted to unbroken silence, till, with the rest of the world, it shall mingle in the resounding valley of Jehoshaphat, rises the church, as if to reunite by a sacred link what the artist has separated. The Pisan Duomo was erected after a victory gained by the Republic over the Saracens; it is the first Gothic monument of Italy, constructed at that solemn era of art, when the Renaissance was manifesting its power. Pilgrimages to and from the East had gradually imbued the Pisans with taste and passion for great monu-

ments, which should mark to future times the trace of nations. Pisa is anterior to Florence in love of illustrious art; but only for the space of a day did she precede a city destined to be sovereign arbitress of modern genius. Singular and providential commencement of the fine arts in Europe! It was by stealing here and there from Greece, Rome, and the oriental cities their most portable monuments, that this noble passion was engendered in Mediæval towns. At first, it seemed more easy and simple to wrest a pillar from some ruined temple of Thebes or Memphis, than to carve it out of the natal rock and sculpture it on the site itself. Chance is, therefore, the true architect of these first gigantic efforts of Italy. They commence by a perpetual borrowing of all kinds of materials, a pell-mell of *chefs-d'œuvre*. The foundations of a pagan temple originally served to build the Christian church; its debris to ornament it; the mutilated statues of false gods became the venerated images of martyrs. Nay, upon the pinnacle of the Pisan temple stands with extended wings a bronze hippogriff, brought from Constantinople, doubtless that no mystery should be forgotten in that mystical collection of all the fables of antiquity and verities of Christianity. Thus,

it is not the boldness of architecture, nor its singular character that strikes the attention; but the infinite details of that mountain of marble, at once Grecian and Gothic, so elaborately wrought by every sort of Christian and profane chisel, half sepulchre and chapel, redolent of creeds and caprices—an immense wall, whereon great artists have essayed their naissant strength; an imperfect stammering, but not devoid of elegance and grace, which wonderfully announced future works of genius. What a revolution was that, when Italy, escaping at length from the stupid, savage barbarism of the thirteenth century, commences the first noble efforts which should render her liberty and genius. Upon this ancient territory of Pisa, within the soil of Tuscany, which gave the alert to the rest of the world, a few nameless sculptors were the first to give a contradiction full of genius to that bastard art transplanted into Italy by Mediæval Greeks, with which the miserable Italians were so long content. On one of those auspicious days, however, of a general peace, they suddenly reflected that the *chefs-d'œuvre* of antique Greece were surely not inferior to the shapeless works of her modern barbarism. This was a new, strange, bold revelation, by which the inspired Italians

quickly profited. Approach, and regard that door of the Pisan cathedral, said to be of Byzantium; for barbarous as it now seems, it once unfolded wide to admit Nicolo of Pisa in his glory, the man who fully awoke ancient Greece, sleeping for so many centuries in her marble sarcophagus. Yea, let us tread respectfully the vacant space that separates the three great monuments of Pisa, for in this spot commenced the fine arts of Italy! Here was originated the Florentine—the art *par excellence.* Here, the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries learned to cut marble, to raise stone, to cast bronze, to sculpture wood, prepare silver and gold, and to embellish miles in extent with painting. Be patient, for in that strange confusion of forms, colors, metals, materials, and efforts, great artists of futurity will readily recognize and discover all resources necessary to them. And what, think you, must be that art of which the Duomo, Baptistry, and Campo Santo of Pisa, those inestimable marvels, are but rude and imperfect lineaments!

In the year 1063, the Pisans, the first to awake to that light proceeding from profane antiquity, rich merchants who had acquired fortune sword in hand, resolved to employ their immense wealth,

and the memorials of their expeditions, in erecting within the town a monument, so complete, grand, and gorgeous, as to surpass everything in Christian Italy. To this effect, they sought in Greece architects, painters, sculptors, and even masons. They summoned to this work all endowed with genius or industry, devoting an entire century, and the superfluity of their fortune, to the enterprise. All the incipient arts obeyed these great Seigneurs of the sea. Brazen walls rose in the air, whose barbarous surface was covered with sculpture and mosaic more barbarous still. They heaped in this place their collected spoils of tombs and altars; and thus did the Tower of Pisa, when scarcely finished, become, as it were, the beacon from whose eminence Tuscan genius might contemplate the future!

Let us penetrate beneath these vaulted ceilings which fifty pillars support aloft. The church is an immense Latin cross, surrounded by columns and pilasters of every order of architecture. It might be said to be composed of specimens of precious marbles, imported by giants. Between the pillars, and within the numerous chapels, sculptor and painter have profusely cast statues and pictures. In the choir, not far from the tomb

of the Archbishop of Pisa, are three bronze statues of Giovanni of Bologna, the great artist, to be encountered whenever the Republic of Florence had need of a *chef-d'œuvre.* There, also, is buried the enemy of Florence and friend of Pisa, King Henry VII., celebrated by Dante himself; and there too did the great artist Nicolo, and his worthy son, Giovanni, first test their skill; men of illustrious talent, only excelled by Michael Angelo, who absorbed all their renown. Amid these admirable essays of an art ere long to be called Florentine, the spectator is dazzled and confounded. It is thus that in reading some grand battle recital of Philip de Comines, are dimly foreshadowed great writers yet to come. Beside the vast Dome rises the Baptistry; in that place, it is only a chapel; in another, the Baptistry would be a cathedral. But what an elegant cathedral! The school of Pisa has produced nothing more excellent! The door served as model to that of the Baptistry of Florence, which Michael Angelo calls the *Gate of Paradise!* I can tell you neither the number nor form of the pillars of the Baptistry, the color or polish of the marbles; and can scarcely allude to the pulpit sculptured by Nicolo of Pisa, and the baptismal fonts supported by porphyry co-

lumns, the spoils of the east. It is certainly very grand, and yet a work of exquisite delicacy. Beneath the hand of these masters, bronze and marble assumed every variety of form and idea. So proud were the old Pisans of that work of the great Nicolo, that it was the duty of the podestat to maintain an armed guard around *si admirabile opera*. It was in bas-relief that he first commenced the mighty revolution in art, which Michael Angelo was to accomplish. In 1232, he had already sculptured the urn of St. Dominico at Bologna, the admirable gem for which Italy surnamed him Nicolo *dall 'urno*. It was not till later years that he executed the bas-reliefs of the pulpit of St. John. This man revived antique art, if not by force of genius, by dint of perseverance. He was the master of Arnolpho of Florence, of his son and worthy competitor, Giovanni of Pisa, and of Andrea del Pisa, who devoted twenty-two years to the execution of one of the doors of the Baptistry at Florence, which Andrea was the master of Donatello and Ghiberti. Such was the illustrious sculptor of the pulpit of St. John. Unfortunately, this master-piece of art has been barbarously degraded in many places. More than one chiselled head has been wrenched from a beautiful

form, reposing in attitude of respect; more than one deprived of the arm which it animated with thought. The Pisan chronicles accuse Lorenzo of Medici in person of these unworthy mutilations. *Il quale, per ornare il suo museo tronco barbaremente, a molto figure, le teste, le braccio a le gambe.* "This man, to adorn his own museum, barbarously wrested from many forms, the head, arm, and leg." Such was the furious ardor of the Medici to augment their museum, that, despite the horror of such a profanation, I will not swear the Pisan chronicle has spoken falsely. Now let us ascend to the summit of the Leaning Tower, one of the most celebrated wonders of Italy. It is entirely of marble; the ascent is by two hundred and ninety-three steps cut in the wall, lighted by large windows. Having attained the summit, a ladder conducts still higher, and you find yourself elevated above the loftiest spires of the Campanila; here, are the formidable bronze statues of the Virgin, Passion, and Justice, which meanwhile have been unable to shake that fortress, half couched in the earth.

How has that inclination of the tower happened? By will of the architect? by an earthquake? by the sinking of the ground? None can tell.

Art, at that era, was too serious and sacred a thing to indulge such caprices, which, in all the arts, ordinarily pertain only to exhausted genius. But, on the other hand, how is it possible to explain that deviation of fifteen feet, which would involve the ruin of any other edifice far less considerable than the Tower of Pisa, whose height is at least one hundred and ninety feet? This tower and dome recall Galileo, the Michael Angelo of science. From its pinnacle, he calculated the fall of heavy bodies, as, at twenty years, he divined the pendulum by following, with the attention of genius, the motion of the iron lamp, still suspended from the ceiling of the cathedral. The lamp of Galileo is exhibited like the apple of Newton. What men, to make such discoveries without affright! while we, feeble mortals, cling tremblingly to the stone balustrade, and reel with vertigo from merely viewing in the distance the mountains of Lucca, the aqueducts, the deep blue sea, Leghorn, and its port.

But of all the great works here collected, of all the miracles erected in this place by the hand of man, the most singular is yet to be described.

Leave these heights, and descend into that immense tomb open at our feet, and learn the final

destination of glory, authority, science, power, and liberty; for at the foot of this tower, which seems to retreat from it with dread—under the holy shadow of the cathedral which protects it, not far from the Baptistry, that sacred door through which the Christian enters life, stretches the Campo Santo, partially hidden beneath its arcades and funeral cypresses. The Campo Santo was the cemetery of this Pisan Republic when she had heroes, defenders, magistrates, and great artists to sepulture. As long as the Republic continued strong, powerful, and glorious, the Campo Santo was open to her dead; it closed with her last great man. The history of Pisa and her national cemetery accomplished their task at the same hour. Here, then, at last, is what men style a pantheon, an inviolable, logical pantheon, where apotheosis of evening is not changed to imprecations on the morrow! Behold, at length, a poetic cemetery, free from confusion, where each holds equal rank in the same glorious nothingness! In effect, the earth, by an admirable privilege brought expressly from Jerusalem, devours the corpses entrusted to it; it leaves naught of the man save his name and his glory. And wherefore need a mortal possess eternally six feet of earth of which

to vaunt? The Campo Santo scarce lends him, for a few days, this last domain of his ambition, and then, there remains nothing of his dead body; not even *that nameless thing* of which Tertullian speaks. In this crowded yet vacant cemetery, the grave-digger of Hamlet could have found no skull to serve for a text to his philosophy, not a bone whereof to jest with his comrades; scarcely could the Prince of Denmark have culled a little grass to weave the nuptial crown of Ophelia! In this solemn place, the true field of repose, where all is at rest, even the dead, there is perfect equality; no confusion, no preference, no ambition, as in our cemetery of Pere Lachaise—that melancholy caricature of life's vanities—only names inscribed on stone, and above them an immortal funeral oration; not the panegyric of one amidst a crowd, but the eternal eulogy of History in honor of all whom this hospitable earth has devoured. When, therefore, the ancient Pisans desired to bestow a meet recompense on warlike virtue, or on civil, not less worthy of tribute, they judged nothing more honorable than to transport this earth from Jerusalem. Around this sacred soil, they reared high walls and light arches as in a cloister. It was Giovanni of Pisa, son of Nicolo, who cut these

open-worked stones, so well adapted to the soft rays of a June moon, and which lose much of their power and charm by daylight. Then, the walls being erected, when Giovanni of Pisa had completed his work, the Republic abandons the funeral enclosure to her favorite artists, that they might embellish the common tomb, which was likewise to be theirs. Singular task, of which we, the impassioned, enthusiastic children of the present, can have no idea!

All her artists, with solemn promptitude, obeyed that appeal of a grateful country. They wished that not a panel of these funeral walls should remain naked or void; that at least there might be an echo in the silence, a crowd in that solitude. It is impossible to describe the effect of these paintings, partially effaced by time, but which still witness the genius and religious faith of their authors. In vain would the tearful eye seek to discover some obliterated traces of the earliest attempts of Tuscan genius; scarcely by means of a few unsullied lines, can we discern the simple dramas with which these old walls are charged. On these defaced stones have practised the best pupils of Giotto, the man who divined painting, and who was not followed in the route he had

marked till a century after by Brunelesco, Donatello, and Masaccio, the great masters. But few of their names are yet legible on the walls of this noble cemetery. Buffamalco, the spirituel buffoon, celebrated by Boccaccio, the delight of Florence, where his *bon-mots* were repeated, who died at the hospital in shouts of laughter, and Bruno di Giovanni, the friend of Buffamalco, but a jealous one, whom the head of Cain deprived of sleep. There are also Simone Memmî, Spinello Aretino, Pietro Orvietro, Benozzo Gozzoli, artificers in coloring, of the school of Cimabue, but with less simplicity and inspiration than their master.

Pre-eminent above all, in that memorable dawn of the fourteenth century, was the great Orgagna, a kind of Michael Angelo precursor, one of the first to devote himself to the work of illustrating the walls of the Campo Santo. This Orgagna was, at the same time, a sculptor, painter, architect, and poet, a usage not uncommon in the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth *barbarous* centuries; he was one of the first Italians that had read Dante, and was imbued with the fanaticism of a devotee for that new poetry. The "Inferno," the "Last Judgment," worlds wandering in space, all the metaphysics—I had almost said all the theology of

this poetry—constituted the sole pre-occupation of Andrea Orgagna. Thus wrapt in the verses of Dante, he wished to retrace upon the walls of the Campo Santo, the "Inferno" of the *Divina Commedia.* But still, this great genius discerned in the poesy of Alighieri, only the form, coloring, action, and drama; he comprehended not its inmost melancholy, nor its hidden pathos, nor its profound sadness. He had but the presentiment of that profane beauty, which was, later, to inspire Raffaelle. What ravishing heads escaped from the hand of this genius! but heads often void of expression, and hence of grandeur. He manifestly but spelled the terrible poem that Michael Angelo was to know by heart. At best, Orgagna has but sketched the "Last Judgment" on the walls of the Campo Santo, Michael Angelo has completed it at the Vatican.

Orgagna is not the only one among the artists of the thirteenth century inspired by Dante. On the contrary, they are all, to a certain extent, the ingenious or terrible offspring of the divine poet. At the cemetery of Pisa, Buffamalco has represented all the heavens described by the *Divina Commedia;* God holds all the seven in his mighty hand. In the *Triumph of Death*, the same Andrea Orgagna, after the example of Alighieri, has

placed his enemies and friends in that "Inferno," which, like Dante, he has divided into gulfs (*bolgia*); he is here, fantastic, facetious, and satirical. Not far from the *Triumph of Death*, a worthy pupil of Giotto has delineated the Patriarchs of the Desert; an austere subject, it is true: but meanwhile, in the midst of these stern brows, see you that pretty maiden under the smiling cowl of a monk? Thus did Meyerbeer in the Huguenots, at the benediction of the poignards, conceal the women beneath the flowing robe of the choristers. Next appears Giotto, the Raffaelle of the earliest epoch of art, who divined color, animation, and life; the man who executed the portrait of Dante, constructed the spire of the Florence Cathedral, for whom all the great signors of Italy, the Polentani of Ravenna, Malatesti of Rimmini, Este of Ferrara, Castruccio of Lucca, Visconti of Milan, and Scala of Verona, alternately contended, as a powerful auxiliary to their ambition and fortune. He also aspired to leave his trace in the Campo Santo. Giotto deposited there not less than four pictures; but, alas! scarcely can a few fragments of these master-pieces be distinguished upon the devastated walls. One depicted the intoxication of Noah, and was specially charming. The patriarch, slightly clad,

succumbs to the first enchantments of inebriation; a young girl, at the aspect of the good man, shades her beauteous eyes with a trembling hand; but the *Curious*, through the fingers, risks a glance. She is called *La Vergognosa*, and has originated a proverb. But how is it possible, in a circuit of half a league, to trace these half-effaced works—all the prophets, the entire Bible, the gospel, the successive painters of the first three ages of painting! As well might we number the dead that repose an instant beneath these cypresses!

The day is not the best time to visit this cemetery, which may be said to have been founded for a congress of kings; the sacred ground where all the tombs are equal. You can indeed profit by the sun, to study, one after another, all these marbles, these numerous debris of antiquity, gathered here and there in the Pisan Republic, and which have themselves also found their place of repose, as if they had led the life of men. Among the fragments which make this cemetery a museum, there are some very remarkable. Profit by the daylight to see them, and finally when night shall have come, when the moon shall pierce, with her calm ray, the last cloud—when the last Englishman, with his importunate, fatiguing whistle shall

have entered his hotel, then is the time for you to glide into the Campo Santo of Pisa. Night, which effaces all other monuments, fills this, on the contrary, with a thousand favorable gleams. The sombre verdure of the cypress is softened in that propitious reflection. The slender colonnades assume bolder outline in those dim vistas; the old cloister is magnified by favor of that melancholy light, as the half-veiled moon capriciously projects her feeble rays over all these remains of olden times.—It is the sun of tombs!

Enter then within this funeral enclosure. The very gate is embellished with a sarcophagus; not a place has been lost in this last asylum of the dead. The ingenious remains of Grecian, of Etruscan, of Italian art, at this hour of the night, show themselves to you as they left the hand of the workman. The mutilated marbles of the morning, the half-obliterated paintings of sunlight, the limpid Italian night restores to honor; she completes, embellishes, magnifies, and renews; she gives to Time a formal lie; she fills that solitude, reanimates that silence. Tread softly, that the shades wandering around their monuments at this hour may take you for a phantom. On your right, move heroes and martyrs; on the left, flies afar

the tapering arcade of the cloister timorously hurrying into the obscurity, while you tread underfoot a thousand funeral inscriptions, broken hatchments, and half-effaced names, emblems which signified in other times, "*Here repose youth and beauty!*" but which, at present, scarcely say, "*Here reposes a dead body, aged four centuries!*" A slow, solemn promenade, full of imposing apparitions! A strange confusion of Pagan and Christian monuments, but little astonished to find themselves united in the same nothingness. Ancient Rome has deposited in this place her Hercules, her Juno, and her Vulcan; Greece has left here her Venus and her Loves; Egypt her Sphinx; and especially have they all emulously sent hither models of their tombs. And know you that, in more than one of these empty coffins, within these sarcophagi, surmounted with the Egyptian Ibis, or else wreathed with the myrtle of Venus, or vine-branch of Bacchus, are couched, to rise no more till the judgment-day, the most fervent Christians of the Middle Ages? All these urns of mythological dead have been filled a second time, but now it is the worshippers of Christ that occupy them. In a sarcophagus of white marble, which no doubt once belonged to some valiant

Roman soldier, reposes the great artist, Nicola; and beside his father, within a graceful amphora of the most beauteous Grecian style, worthy of his hand, lies Giovanni, his son, architect of the Campo Santo. Excellent example which these artists gave there to future generations, viz. that Antiquity was not designed to be ingloriously mutilated and scattered to the winds, but, on the contrary, that she was sacred and respectable in her decay, and that a Christian could rest calmly even within coffins consecrated by the priests of Jupiter.

Thus, all these antique tombs seem to glide onward, while your melancholy glance seeks to divine to what men they have appertained a thousand years since; to whom they belonged three centuries past. All these admirable receptacles of the dead may be said to have been constructed for eternity; they are covered with images, emblems, humorous or terrible scenes, like the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad*. To complete them, they have placed, at hazard, other fragments of pillars, inscriptions, statues, or busts; foreign, both inscriptions and busts, to the monuments they complete. And yet, this has a great effect in the partial lunar light. Unable to imagine how a Greek statue should be mounted on a

Roman tomb, or the bust of a young man crown the sarcophagus of a young girl, you whisper that, doubtless, they were interrupted in their nocturnal vigil, and had remained pell-mell in the place where they found themselves, without having had time to reconnoitre their position. Meanwhile, proceed fearlessly; admire, on the tomb of a Pisan soldier, these two beautiful images of Castor and Pollux; remark, I pray you, on the sepulchre of a holy bishop, the dancing Graces, and then involuntarily recall these verses of Horace:—

> Jam Cytherea choros ducit Venus, imminente luna,
> Juncta'que Nymphis Gratiæ decantes!

Further on, upon a pedestal where there is mention of Jacopo d'Appiano, of whose history I know nothing, is a bust of Junius Brutus, the founder of a republic extinct as is the republic of Pisa. Near to Brutus, two lions support an oval sarcophagus (a singular form to give a tomb); within this oval is enshrined the body of a Guelph of Pisa; while in another, not far distant, is contained that of a Pisan Ghibeline, surmounted with a light pillar, covered with the turban of Mohammed.

Bien plus! upon the broken frontispiece of a

temple of Diana, stand side by side the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul. They cast a severe regard on the sleeping *Endymion*. Some very modern marbles are mingled, I scarcely know by what right, with these works of antiquity; a tomb, for instance, sculptured by Thorswalden, that immoderately extolled artist. It suffices to compare that tomb by Thorswalden with the adjacent one of the sculptor Thomas of Pisa, executed by his pupils. But see! behold a strange thing!—beside Thomas, the believing artist, interred there by his pupils, see this great monument full of ostentation! Have you read aright the name this marble bears? It is *Algorotti!* the Venitian scoffer, so beloved by Frederick II., the Italian imitator of Voltaire, the ordinary skeptic of his Majesty the King of Prussia, sepultured in holy ground—and by whom sepultured? By the King of Prussia himself, who composed his inscription: *Algorotto, Ovidii æmulo, Fredoricus Magnus.* "To Algorotti, the rival of Ovid! Frederick the Great."

There, too, among the dead of yesterday, is the fair Countess Schouvaloff, who died so young and beautiful twenty years since; she rests between two celebrated jurisconsults of the fourteenth century. And opposite, at the end of that long

avenue of vacant or full coffins, who, then, has been bold enough to lie down in the admirable sarcophagus whereon a Grecian chisel has represented all the Hyppolitus of Euripides! It may be pronounced even superior to the Phædrus of Euripides. It may be said, from the elegance of these personages, the beauty of the lineaments, that the artist was inspired by the Phèdræ of Racine! Who then, once more, is sleeping within this priceless marble, wrought, without doubt, for one of the conquerors of proud Troy? It is a queen, that has confided to that urn her mortal remains. In this sarcophagus, Beatrice, mother to the Countess Mathilde, wished to repose. She sent to seek that Pagan urn in the temple of Bacchus, and sleeps within it, as does Clement XII. in the tomb of Agrippa. Such is the destiny of great art!

Here, again, is the sarcophagus of a great, unknown sculptor, who awoke the genius of Nicolo of Pisa. Upon this marble, one of the most elegant of antiquity, is represented a hunt of Hyppolitus, son of Theseus. And behold here the model by which Nicolo divined the style of antique statues. He learned thence how to place a figure, how to animate it—in a word, he disco-

vered all the secrets of that unknown art which he was to communicate to so many others. Thus was it, that in reading some verses of Malherbe, La Fontaine felt the instinct of a poet. The beautiful pulpit which we just now admired in the Baptistry of Pisa, has no other origin than the borrowed tomb of the Countess Beatrice. Anno Domini 1116.

The night passes swiftly in these solemn evocations. Meanwhile, you hear countless varied murmurs. The cypresses balance their dark foliage, the wind sighs beneath the Gothic arches, the sea roars in the distance; and, in a side chapel, a burning lamp lights a pale and bloody Christ. The Saviour, full of sorrow and forgiveness, drags his cross along the *Via Doloroso*. Without, at intervals, sings the nightingale of Juliet, come from Verona to Pisa. Disturbed by this rummage among brambles, suddenly dart forth myriads of fire-flies—ethereal phosphorus; surely, they are the spirits of the dead! At the same time the moon, from the summit of the Leaning Tower, casts her vacillating beams upon the walls, and instantly there float around you the numberless Christian or profane images, escaped from the pencil of so many great masters! It is the hour

of universal resurrection! What awe, and what rapture! How shall we, at the sight of so much genius and virtue buried there, refuse to believe that sentence of the Sovereign Pontiff who consecrated the Campo Santo: *Si quis in isto Campo Santo sepultus fuerit, vitam possidebit æternum.* "Whosoever shall be interred in this holy ground, will have eternal life."

FLORENCE.

CHAPTER I.

HAVING now arrived within these noble walls, on the festal ground of Italy, in that unrivalled of Italian cities; now, in fine, that we are at Florence, let us speak of her at our ease, traverse slowly this vast museum of marvels and memorials, for, unlike all other towns absorbed about the future, the past alone is her life, memory her hope.

So much of life is compressed in her brief span of other days, that, at present, a repose of many ages is before her, so perfectly has she at once accomplished the successive destinies of towns; satiated herself, at one stroke, with liberty and bondage, victories and defeats, prosperity and misery.

Singular town, which has served as an avenue to all the great ideas whereon the glory, prosperity, and experience of modern history are founded! Thus, after quitting the Campo Santo

of Pisa, when I perceived in the distance this admirable resuscitated image of revolutions and tempests, what I had learned of Italy vanished from recollection; the great name of Florence sounded louder to my heart and soul than that of Rome herself, the Eternal City! Rome, in effect, is the solemn tomb of the old Pagan universe, Florence, the ancient cradle of the new world at the instant when Christian Europe, awaking to the fine arts, begins to recognize by a smile Dante and Michael Angelo; as, for his mother, did the young Marcellus, Virgil.

Florence is the mother-land of all poetry and art which belong not to antiquity. Like Christopher Columbus, she is the discoverer of a new world, but not merely as the Genoese, one of diamonds, gold, slaves, and pearls, but a distinct world of intelligences, wandering promiscuously and indefinitely in the dust and night of the Middle Age. She was the first to utter the great cry which awoke Michael Angelo and Galileo, and to rend in twain, not the veil of the temple, but the otherwise thick darkness of barbarism. Listen! from that silent earth divine harmonies will issue! Behold, and before you will rise an entire city, sculptured, engraven, and painted by the most

illustrious genius. On all those immense open gates, upon the useless ramparts, where may be doubly read the name of Michael Angelo as soldier and as architect, interrogate history, and suddenly you will see arrayed before you that whole nation of turbulent, busy heroes; violent democrats, imbued with all the noble necessities of the greatest seigneurs; dealers in gold, yet expert in wielding a sword; as ardent to foment a revolt as to build a *chef-d'œuvre;* fearless Ghibellines, dauntless Guelphs, both one and the other covered with their own blood; and, what a little absolves them from the blood they have spilled, founding, amid all these civil tumults, the same arts which the peaceable Athenians of Aspasia or of Pericles had, with so much labor, created. Such is that people, whom we may style the *Etruscans of the Middle Age*, from whom, while living, emanated more new ideas, more lofty passions, more great works of art, than have produced, in similar space of time, all the combined nations of Christian Europe. It is impossible for me to describe the tumult of my thoughts in approaching Florence. On the way, I had, with the impassioned interest of a neophyte, reperused the charming book of M. Delécluze, a most sincere

and learned writer; and as his history is simply and ably written, full of facts, and moderate in style, I had it perfectly in memory. History is endowed with the special prerogative of rendering life, action, and passion to all the scattered ashes she has gathered in her powerful hand. She sows around her every kind of debris, and these, like the stones of Deucalion and Pyrrha, she quickly changes into as many moving, thinking men. But what infinite interest is added to the drama, when you suddenly find yourself upon the very theatre where it was enacted! When you can exclaim, "Behold the battle-field!—the tribune!—the prison!—the throne!—the altar!—the scaffold!" *Apropos*, I had forgotten to relate that, in returning from the Campo Santo of Pisa, I passed the foot of the Tour de la Faim. At that moment, the moon was bloody; a mysterious funeral light was exhaled from these sombre walls; it seemed to me that I heard the sound of human teeth grinding within an empty skull! There is no written poetry which can express the effect of that tower.

Florence! see Florence, then, before us! Imagine a stone palace, lightly placed on flowers, so that the flowers, without bending their heads, support that noble house; a museum within, a

fortress without. She has, in effect, been built on a field of lilies and roses, without stifling either the roses or lilies. She is sheltered, like a true, cajoling, coquettish Italian, between two hills, covered with olives, vineyards, and flowering pomegranates; and she has, to admire her rather sunburnt beauty, the Arno, as proud, and not less elegant than the Parisian Seine. Seen afar off, you would exclaim, "La Grand Ville!" as you regard that array of imposing towers, sounding spires, glittering domes, and countless summits, the ornament of most great cities, in which Paris is so deficient. Thus, you penetrate through a long suite of houses, or rather citadels; and now, more clearly than in the town of Genoa, are enabled to comprehend what constitutes a great architect. Here is no exterior decoration, no paintings, but stern walls apparently of granite, inviolable houses of one single black stone, rising aloft till lost in space. The roof projects into the street, the window is high and narrow, the door massive. Look upward, and behold these menacing battlements! Upon the wall is still engraven the escutcheon of the master. At each of these windows there has been conflict! From the top of these battlements have men been precipitated!

In these narrow streets have citizens clashed in combat! Often have these walls been witnesses of bloody tragedies; and it is therefore that they were hewn out of the living rock, that they might not be demolished by blood. How many times have these ponderous doors opened for prison, death, or exile! At that day, the father of a family said not, "My domestic fireside!"—he said, "My domestic citadel!" These men lived with arms in their hands, and hatred in their hearts. For a republic, tell me not of those petty equalities which jostle in passing; they see each other too nearly not to discern all their misery and vanity.

But if the Florentines had been contented to slay, pillage, and exile—to erect on either side fortress against fortress—in fine, to devour each other like furious wolves, where then were their history? They might have hunted these wild beasts, tracked them to their dens, accomplished their revenge at the same time upon the animal and his lair, and all would have been told. Happily, the sentiment of a common liberty imposed silence on the Guelphs and Ghibellines in periods of danger, and then they united in the same perils. Afterwards, wearied with the monotonous aspect of their citadels, they conceived the design of

erecting public edifices, on which the harassed eye might turn for relief, to contemplate masterpieces of art which were the common property. It may be said to the glory of the ancient citizens of Florence, that they were less egotistical than the republicans of Genoa. They adorned not their private abodes, but their city. While the Genoese inhabited rich palaces in a town void of monuments, the Florentines occupied empty palaces in a city full of *chefs-d'œuvre*. They knew that man passes away, and the town remains. They willingly consented to demolish each other, but at no price would they efface from a public wall a name, an armorial ensign, were it the name even of a traitor, the insignia of a vanquished foe.

This people, so immeasurably turbulent, paused suddenly to construct a public place where they could more conveniently indulge their animosities. The different corps of artisans, in the height of a general battle, agreed to a suspension of arms, in order to build a common church, whither each could bear his statue and his offering. Thus, while the houses of individuals paid the forfeit of these civil wars, the city was progressively embellished. To her alone belonged the architects, painters, and sculptors of the Republic. These

men loved the arts for others as well as themselves; in this they were true philanthropists, and in the right, for, in good conscience, it cannot be admitted that one man should be so completely master of a picture of Raffaele as to have the power to destroy, or even enjoy it alone. This the Florentines understood perfectly; and hence is it that this town, which has obliterated nothing of her art, is to-day so rich in monuments of every kind. What is there astonishing in the fact that we are so poor in this respect, who, at each revolution, have shivered in fragments temples, palaces, and even tombs; we, who regard it a necessity of our hatred or favor, to efface on the morrow the monuments of yesterday; we, who have carved four or five times, at the angles of the Louvre, the eagle, or the *fleur-de-lis?* At Florence, in the court of the Prison, I have seen entire, the numberless escutcheons of the Podestats of the Republic. There, under the battlements of the Old Palace, glitter still nine escutcheons, which, in France, since 1298, would have been effaced at least one hundred thousand times. The Ghibelline escutcheon, a red lily on a white ground; the Guelph, with the keys of the Holy See; the escutcheon of the Duke of Anjou, and that of the

King of Naples; the emblazoned insignia of the Duke of Athens; the implements of the wool-carders; the six balls of the Medici; the ensigns of Napoleon, and finally those of the Grand Dukes of the house of Austria.

Among all these escutcheons of the ephemeral grandeur of the Florentine Republic, certainly the one which would have been expunged with the greatest frenzy among us Frenchmen and philosophers, is the monogram of our Lord Jesus Christ, named King of the Florentines in 1527. The Divine Saviour himself has the honor of his royal escutcheon between that of the Duke of Athens and the carders of wool. Accordingly, at one glance, you can embrace all that history which this people have respected as they have the monuments of their town. Intelligent nation! the only one in the world which has taught the inviolate sanctity of history; that the greatest popular fury should not efface a single line of its pages. I believe there is not, in any other people of the universe, the example of such moderation.

Since, then, we are in the presence of the Old Palace, occupied in considering that eventful history, let us pause an instant. The place is fortified and adorned, consisting of high walls, which

protect illustrious art. Michael Angelo is there seen beside the Medici, and not far from Raffaele, who desired to build one of the houses of this site. Art and policy are mingled and confounded within this crowded inclosure. There, each marble has a sense, each pillar is a memorial. The Palace is at once a fortress, a royal abode, a chamber for orators, a field of combat for *emeute*, a forum to make laws, and a museum. Her lofty, menacing walls are defended by a tower, from whose high belfry, in times of civil war, sounded the popular alarum. Every stroke of this terrible bell made those hearts, to-day so tranquil, vibrate with rage. At the foot of the tower still stands the stone lion, with a *fleur-de-lis* in his claws, the passive witness of the many revolutions of five hundred years; while in front of the tower, and as if presenting to you the contest of two giants, rises the colossal David of Michael Angelo—naturally, it is the tower that is crushed by the statue. As a pendant to the David, there is the Hercules of Bandinelli, which might be supposed the exaggerated yet still grand brother of David. At the same time, the fountain of Ammonato casts its water into marble basins, supported by four brazen horses; you would call it one of the Neptunes of

the *jets d'eau* of Versailles. On the ground below, and still on the same side with the David, the illustrious Orgagna reared these noble arcades, underneath which the people of Florence might repair, arms in hand, to discuss the interests of the Republic. The portico is said to be the most beautiful in the world.

We Parisians, who know nothing beyond the arcades of the Palais Royal, and Rue de Rivoli, can conceive no idea of such a monument in the open air, free to all, and yet so complete, that a whole people assembled beneath them can say, "*Je suis chez moi!*" Architecture has seldom executed a grander work, for a simple promenade under these arcades excites an inexpressible sensation of comfort, scarcely to be encountered in the most splendid halls of Genoa. The Loggia, moreover, is adorned like the saloon of a prince. It was for the Lodge of Lancers that Donatello executed his Judith, that Giovanni of Bologna wrought his Rape of the Sabines, an admirable marble, redolent of brutal passion. It was to embellish the Loggia, that Benvenuto Cellini, the great artist in armor, a kind of bandit sculptor, who ornamented his poignard as if it were his mistress, created his Perseus, with what infinite

terrors, you have read in his memoirs. This *chef-d'œuvre* of Bellini is accompanied by two *bas-reliefs*, in which you discover all the delicate chasing of the Florentine goldsmith. Remark, also, the *bas-reliefs* of the Sabines of Giovanni of Bologna, and those of the statue of Cosmo. These Florentines were lavish of art, grand or minute; they never knew when to pause in adorning their city, their sovereign, and well-beloved mistress. These little statuettes of half a foot lose nothing of their delicacy by the side of the colossal David, as neither do they take from their gigantic neighbor any of his grandeur. As I have just related, to complete the *tout-ensemble*, rises in the centre of this place the equestrian statue of Cosmo I. by Giovanni of Bologna. You must not weary of hearing the same great names repeated in enumerating the great works of one city. In those days, when she had recognized a great artist, the town abandoned herself to him, body and soul, and he passed his life in embellishing her. Giovanni of Bologna and Michael Angelo have done for Florence, what Nicola and his son Giovanni did for Pisa—not only have they made her beautiful, but likewise grand and rich. Let steel clash against steel, when the glory and durability of towns is the

stake; but better, infinitely, the chisel of the sculptor than the sword of the conqueror.

If this place appear to you unequal, the Tribune to be isolated from the Palace, the Loggia too disconnected from the whole; that the statuettes, detached from each other, need a link to unite them in a group; that, in fine, the arrangement, altogether, remains unfinished; know, that such was the will of the people, averse to building their Tribune on the site of two houses which they had razed. It is the first, and perhaps the only time, that Florence has not sacrificed her political animosity to the desire of embellishment.

Notwithstanding all its apparent disorder, this place of the Grand Duke attracts and fascinates you irresistibly. You pass from one statue to another, gaze on them at a distance, approach the *bas-reliefs*, linger by the Tribune, traverse the Loggia, and admire the motionless escutcheons below the battlements. What would you not give, at that instant, to see this strange town, animated, as in her best days, with violent passions, mighty wrath, heroic animosities! The republic, the oligarchy, the Florentine monarchy, still live upon these walls. Examine, and you will discover the traces of their passage; blows of the sword, thrusts

of the poignard; sonorous words and imperious eloquence; vociferation of the populace; abasement of the nobles; abasement of the people, and their alternate grandeur; a town so illustrious in her passions, that Charlemagne wished to rebuild it, somewhat upon the model of ancient Rome, and which had merited that honor by her revolutions, intelligence, and genius. Scarcely had she assumed the appellation of Florence, ere the Countess Mathilde gave her to the Pope; and she entered into the cruel wars of Guelphs and Ghibellines, which have produced for us St. Bartholomew and Queen Catherine of Medici. Florence augmented amid her disorders, became powerful through civil war. The more these republicans massacred each other, the more superb and strong they grew. It is the history of the men born of the serpent of Cadmus. Never have such disorders been manifest in any history, followed by such results. The Florentines commenced, as did the Romans, by brigandage; they burned Fièsole, which overshadowed them, and converted that important town into suburban villas. They erected towers before building houses of abode. Contrarily to all other nations of the world, they commenced with the palace and ended with the

cottage. They were merchants previous to being soldiers; then they became artists; and, finally, fought as men who had never constructed a temple, nor executed a picture. They have been wool-carding sovereign princes; they have been exchanging, scabbard-making, goldsmith-nobles; they have made and attempted everything; they have succeeded in all, saving in making laws; and that ignorance of laws, which would have ruined any other nation, has served this. We are confounded with admiration when we think that from this republic, lost in the labyrinth of Italian republics, have emanated all the arts, sciences, and ideas upon which modern Europe has lived, and still subsists. We would fain prostrate ourselves before that land of poetry, of policy, history, science, of the fine-arts, and, with clasped hands, thank her for so many benefits! Nay, furthermore, not only has she given impulse to the modern, but saved, as far as practicable, the ancient world. Courageous and devoted, and already skeptical in her Christianity (skepticism is the legitimate offspring of civil wars), she first dared to proclaim that the ruins of the Pagan universe were holy and respectable; and she has searched among these noble debris with incom-

parable vigilance and admiration. While Venice transported painting from Constantinople, while Pisa brought architecture from Syria, Florence ascended far higher than Constantinople, without losing herself in that bastard art of the more remote East. Florence ascended to Rome, and from Rome to Athens. And what a solemn instant was that, when, in the height of her studies, after so many, such abrupt changes—after having submitted to the alternate yoke of Emperor and Pope, of noble and citizen, she reposed in her riches and in her liberty—she heard the accents of that expressive voice, *vox clamantis*, when she heard the voice of Dante revealing to her at once the past, the present, and the future!

Thus, then, this town belongs to antiquity by her studies, to modern times by her discoveries. She reaches with one hand to Phidias, with the other to Michael Angelo. She is the daughter of Dante and of Homer. She has had faith, at the same hour, in Jupiter and in the God of the Gospel. She has discovered the Venus buried in the earth, the very day that Petrarch found the Italian language hidden in the *Divina Commedia*. She has, by the space of three hundred years, preceded, in the culture of the fine arts, all other nations of

the west and north, whose eyes remained closed to that great light. Pre-eminent among modern people, she has been eloquent, impassioned, poetic, elegant, amorous, gorgeous. She has worn the first robe of silk, the first mantle of velvet, the first chiselled armor. She has been the queen of the world; a queen, in her magnificence, her grace, her language, her youth, and her beauty.

But we have, meanwhile, left the Old Palace at a distance! The architect, Arnolpho di Lapo, a pupil of Nicola of Pisa, gave the first *projet* of this covered forum. It is the oldest republican monument of Florence, and yet nothing is wanting, neither pictures, statues, nor ceilings. The monk Savonarola, that Junius Brutus under a frock, presided in person at the construction of its vast circumference, which could contain ten thousand calm desperadoes. The walls were scarcely raised ere covered with pictures in honor of Florence; one of these recalls the following fact, which is little surprising in the town of Machiavelli. Of twelve ambassadors, sent from various parts of Europe to Boniface VII., two were Florentines. Among the statues are pre-eminent the Adam and Eve of Bandinelli, and the Victory of Michael Angelo. Singular republicans, who could not

deliberate on affairs of state but in presence of *chefs-d'œuvre* worthy of kings!

In this hall, to-day silent and empty, what revolutions, what *emeutes*, what animosities have originated! Victors and vanquished, Ghibellines and Guelphs, judges, executioners, victims, citizens, merchants, bankers, and soldiers, have all arrived in this chamber, urged by the passions of the hour, and indulged in random strife, without restraint, law, or motive! There, nobles and democrats looked each other in the face, and emulously retorted words of hatred and injury. Then, in the next moment, and without apparent reasons, they passed from enmity to love, from rage to joy; and now succeeded endless fêtes, private and public rejoicings, hymns, processions, spectacles, and bonfires! These furious men of yesterday, on the morrow traversed the town crowned with flowers; at their head, a chief called *Amour*. They summoned, from all parts of Europe, dancers, mountebanks, Bohemians, and cooks. They cast their money in the streets, as if it had been only their blood. Such was Florence of the thirteenth century—a sanguinary, joyous fanatic, wearing alike the broidered mantle and the poignard; thus pre-

paring in advance every kind of cruelty and of license for embryo pestilence.

Into this hall, where we now are, have passed successively the Duke of Athens and Walter of Brienne, a sort of intriguer, become, we know not how, King of Florence. When he had been banished, then began to appear the Medici, the legitimate usurpers of Florence; and at the very time when she said to the noble whom she approved, "I make thee one of the people!"—reserving, however, the power of remaking him noble, if he should displease her. Observe further, I pray you, that their monarchy commenced with a republican, Sylvester of Medici. To him succeeded the wool-carder, Lando, a man of genius and courage, sprung from the lowest ranks of the people. Moreover, it was the era of popular enfranchisement throughout the world, the auspicious or fatal hour of William Tell and Arteveld, of Nicola Rienzi, and of Marino Faliero; the period of *Jaquerie* in France, of the revolt of Ciompi (comrades) in Florence, the insurrection of Wat Tyler and Jack-straw in England.

Here ends the history of the Old Palace. When the Medici manifested themselves, the Republic no more inhabited its halls; and this, which had

been the palace of the people, is now only the palace of the Medici. This family had, by nature, an indescribable thirst for domination and magnificence, which a throne alone could satisfy. It seems to me rendering undue honor to award them the first place in the civilization of Florence. It is to Dante that pre-eminence is due, and next to him Galileo; the Medici come after these. They have had the honor of founding the Museum of Florence, but they have given her nothing else. Trace their history, and you will see what good fortune can accomplish when it attaches to great families. One elevates himself by commerce, and becomes master of a people, because he had been a skilful speculator. Another, after having been a proscriber, as implacable as Sylla, receives the noblest of surnames, *The Father of his Country!* This one is borne in triumph for having escaped the assassin's steel; that, for having passionately loved painting, sculpture, poetry, and all the fine arts, marches at the head of gentlemen of civilized Europe. So propitious was fortune to them, that exile, or if not exile, murder, always occurred in season to repair the tottering fabric of their popularity. They flourished under the very blows which should have crushed them. You know the

history of Savonarola, the republican of the ancient Tarpeian Rock, when he undertook to launch an anathema upon these elegant, *spirituel* usurpers of liberty. He was the first who attempted resistance to a despotism surrounded with such seductions. The monk maintained a bold front against the prince. He attacked the Medici in all the passions which rendered them popular, breaking in pieces the splendid works of marble and bronze, rending the silk and velvet, and heaping, in one republican funeral-pile, the armorial ensigns, sculpture, books of poets, and all that royal ornament wherewith *Le Magnifique* had surcharged Florence. *Eh bien!* the Magnifique was speedily avenged of the monk! Florence, like a courtezan whose repentance is fugitive as her virtue, soon relapsed into the vice she loved. She burned her monk as she had burned her veils and laces, and returned to the prince who had decked her so richly. Then it is that appears in the background the prudent Machiavelli, the man who is, in a different way, as great an inventor as Galileo. Machiavelli is the discoverer, not of policy, but of diplomacy, its indispensable modern complement. Of pliant, flexible genius, he was the first to express, in formula, a sad truth, which time has

but too fully demonstrated, the inutility of good faith and probity among the divers estates of Europe. He carried prudence even within the bounds of treason, and found a solution for all the crimes of his time, even for those of the Borgia. He was endowed with every species of courage, down to the least difficult of all in those barbarous days, that of submitting to torture without complaint, as to a cruel necessity.

No, seek not the Medici in the Old Palace, neither on the Public Place; seek them in their museum, in their royal abodes, in their tombs; especially seek them at the court of Rome, when Leo X. and Clement VII., those first-crowned Medici, compelled Florence to bow to their gorgeous protection.

In a word, and as the most honorable decision to this question, Florence has but one master, a single founder and legitimate king—Dante Alighieri!

CHAPTER II.

DANTE—THE CATHEDRAL—THE LIBRARY—THE GALLERY.

YES, it is Dante, who is sovereign master of Florence, and of that grand epoch of human genius called the *Renaissance*. At his voice, awoke modern Italy, as did ancient Greece at the voice of Homer and Pythagoras. He, like them, celebrated country and creed, gods and heroes; he, too, was the creator of the language he has spoken. This knowledge was boundless in scope; he understood theology like Savonarola, policy as well as Machiavelli; he had read Aristotle and Plato; he was painter, musician, orator, and soldier—in a word, he was a poet of the stature of Homer. He commenced by endowing his country with a language, the noblest gift man can make to his fellows. And after a lapse of five hundred years the poesy of Dante yet lives! For five hundred years, every generation that has passed over that land has known by heart the poem, conceived

amid blood, carnage, incendiarism, all the furious passions of civil war, and written in exile. In this poem, the depository of his mind, heart, and soul, Dante founded, unconsciously, that great Florentine school which has no equal under the sun. He revealed to his age manners, letters, science, and the fine arts. So profoundly did he stir that nation of republicans, that suddenly, by incredible effort, they emerged from the barbarism and darkness of the thirteenth century. His book was the first and the last word of that history. He originated the language of religion, of morals, of policy, and of satire. He who dug so terrible a hell, the only one to be feared, drew from that Christian "Inferno" Homer, Horace, Ovid, Lucan the victim of Nero, Eneas the hero of Virgil, and Cæsar, whom he has replaced in the heaven of Virgil, and beside Cæsar, Brutus; thus giving, with all his powers, a contradiction to the gospel, which had damned all these great men of antiquity.

Dante has then rescued from eternal fire the soul of the Pagan world, as Leo X., in later times, saved, as far as he could, its material ruins—a double resurrection; but that of Dante was the most courageous. Let us, however, award to

Dante and Leo X. the double honor of that *renaissance.* Both have said to Pagan Lazarus, *Arise, and walk!* Each has had his part of this benefit. Dante appropriated, for his share, the soul of the resuscitated dead; the Medici have preserved for theirs, the marble and sculpture of his tomb.

This man, fallen from heaven into Mediæval Italy, cast the vivid light of his poetry over all these accumulated ruins. He first indicated to the dazzled Italians to what admirable purposes these decaying fragments might be rendered subservient —the historians, poets, artists, and monuments of antiquity—precious relics, scattered here and there at random, in the horrible rubbish of incendiarism and shipwreck. And from such a lamentable aspect, Dante drew this following powerful conclusion: "that it was not necessary to reconstruct antiquity, but to invent something which might be antiquity in its turn." Dante, the theologian, knew too well that he could not reanimate the dust of extinct creeds as he would upraise the pillar of a broken temple; therefore said he to his age, "let us, in turn, be poets, architects, historians, philosophers, and sculptors! Let us be ancestors! Let us arrange, for our convenience, what may serve us in the ancient poetic world; but, far

from obeying these ruins, let us force them to obey us!"

You have already seen the influence of this man in the monuments of Pisa, whose greatest artists he inspired; nor is it less manifest in those of Florence. Dante, in effect, is, at the distance of three centuries, the father of Michael Angelo, who, at the end of that interval, had the honor to close the epoch of *Renaissance*, which Dante, his master, had opened. And here, again, what a man do we present! While yet a child, Poliziano had taught him to read the *Divina Commedia*, all whose doctrines he had adopted, till he saw nothing in all Florence but Dante. A sincere republican, a faithful Christian, with slow and calm imagination, bold and lively execution, he lived alone, with no family save his pupils, no mistress but his Florence. In that crowd of traffickers, manufacturers, and exchangers, Michael Angelo loved and esteemed only artists. He jostled this people of merchants without seeing them. He would have deemed it beneath his dignity to honor them with his contempt. Even to the close of his ninety fruitful years, Michael Angelo was the slave of Dante; he, whom the inflexible Pope, Julius II., had such difficulty in subduing! He

resisted at once the Medici and Ariosto. A republican as had been Dante his master, he bore to corrupt and corrupting Rome, not only the design of the dome of St. Peter's, and the frescoes of the Sistine Chapel, but also the austere manners and liberty of antique Florence. He too, Michael Angelo, has executed his "Inferno," and still following the example of his master, placed therein the vicious and the guilty; that is, the licentious, bloody friends of Paul III. After having transferred the poetry of Dante to stone, and carved it in marble, he wrought the philosophy of the master into the verses which he wrote in his declining years—the admirable old man! In that closing hour, all illusion dissipated—even that of glory—he weeps for himself and for Florence. What alone consoled and reassured him, was the pure, chaste worship he had vowed to beauty in art, for Michael Angelo too had his unknown, adored Beatrice, who led him to heaven by paths sown with stars.

Remain united, then, in the respect of nations and admiration of the world, ye masters of the most brilliant epoch of human genius—thou Dante, who didst commence, and thou Michael Angelo, who hast completed it!

The town of Florence is, then, divided between two perfectly distinct architects, Dante, and the house of Medici; the old crenellated stones of the Republic, and the more elegant ones of the Monarchy. Under inspiration of the poet, have arisen all the great architects, all the great monuments of the town. Under the protection of the Kings of Florence, have flourished all the marvellous talents which have covered this beautiful city with such varied ornament. Not far from the Dome, is the site of a bench on which Dante was accustomed to sit, from whence he could see gradually rising that church Del Fiore, which has engendered St. Peter's of Rome, as it was itself engendered by Della Spina at Pisa. It is admirable to observe how all these gigantic edifices are attached by one invisible link. At Pisa, on the borders of the Arno, the architect Nicola, as if in sport, has wrought in stone the most ingenious little cathedral possible. It is an exquisite masterpiece of miniature-gothic. Upon these airy walls, he profusely cast all the caprices of his genius, and employed this elegant sketch in teaching his two sons, Andrea and Giovanni, how to wield the chisel of their father. You would imagine that you might take the beautiful edifice in your right

hand and bear it into your domestic museum. Well, it only requires to see the Duomo of Florence to comprehend that the architect, Arnolpho di Lapo, wished to execute the outline of Nicola on a grand scale. He, too, desired to accumulate miracle upon miracle, but in an immense space. This place of the Duomo, whither the poet came every evening to rest from the meditations of the day, is as richly embellished with monuments as that of Pisa. It has its Baptistry, its Dome, and its Tower. It possesses no Campo Santo. The Campo Santo of Florence you may find scattered here and there in the cloisters, churches, and public places. You strike every instant against a glory—nay, against the dead!

The Baptistry of Florence is a monument of the Middle Age, perfectly resplendent with the youthful adornment of the *Renaissance!* It has three bronze gates, each a masterpiece; the first of which was sculptured by Andrea, son of Nicola, baptized into the kingdom of his father. After him, and at a much later period, the town and commune of Florence resolved to add two gates to the Baptistry, and, after a competition of a year's duration, they were confided to Lorenzo Ghiberti; the *Gates of Paradise*, as Michael An-

gelo styled them a hundred years from their construction. Upon that illustrious bronze, the artist expended forty years of his life. He reproduced, with singularly calm energy, the complete history of the Old Testament; and in the framework thereof, he has placed the portrait of his father, and his own. Nothing can be more charming, or delicately wrought than the bronze on which is represented all that simple, artless drama. Eve comes into the world borne by angels! Moses receives the tables of the law; Joshua crosses the Jordan. On the other door, the life of Jesus Christ commences. Among the miracles of the Saviour, you will observe the Lazarus, imitated by Raffaelle. Imagine him, the handsome young man of eighteen years, standing before that speaking bronze, and studying so lovingly the compositions of Ghiberti!

But, meanwhile, the Cathedral is before you—not immovable, but, on the contrary, floating in the azure of the blue sky reflected in its marbles. You are, at first, dazzled by the unexpected apparition. The inspiration of Dante has never produced a grander work. The complete *Renaissance* illumines these walls. Now, Gothic art is forever surpassed, Byzantium is vanquished, the East is

put to flight, and the new work is accomplished. I can well believe that Dante would often go to seat himself in this place, where he could successfully realize all his dreams. The first architect of the Duomo was ——— who could he be? Arnolfo di Lapo, then Giotto, then Orgagna, and finally, Brunellesco; the latter had to contend against the antique Pantheon, against the Cupola of St. Sophia at Constantinople; and later, he had the honor of being vanquished in turn by the Cupola of St. Peter's at Rome, borne aloft by a son of Florence.

How shall we describe the Duomo, and tell you aught that has not been repeated a thousand times? How shall we find adequate language for the reality in portraying it to those who have seen it, or probable terms for such as have not yet admired it? It is less a temple than a town. The wall is covered with blue and white marble in perfect symmetry, and loaded with statues, *bas-reliefs*, and mosaics. Instantly on entering the vast interior, you are astonished to find it as grand within as without. The light falls from above, colored by the windows, refracted by the pillars, darting capriciously from the eternal mosaic, which extends afar beneath the arches, like green moss

in a forest of secular oaks. Throughout and around you, reigns silence devoid of terror or confusion. You realize that, even in this fresh twilight, the sun and his ardent rays are immediately above your head. In this populous desert, you experience none of the inquietudes that possess the soul in the churches of the north; for, underneath these vaults, softly respire Faith, Hope, and Charity. Besides, the inhabitants of these solitudes are lying everywhere about you, at your feet, on your right and on your left, wrapped in their marble shrouds. There, at the foot of his finished work, sleeps Brunellesco, the first occupant; by his side reposes Giotto, the exquisite, immortal architect of the Campanile, whose epitaph Ango Polizianos himself, the elegant Latinist, composed. There are also, under the Duomo, poets, orators, and soldiers promiscuously mingled. Orgagna has represented Pietro Farnese riding a mule, wherein he is as bold as Bossuet when he presents the brave Count de Fontaine *porte dans la chaise.* There, too, is Poggio, the licentious jester. On the side nave, is represented the stern image of Dante in scarlet robe, walking in ancient Florence. The cupola is embellished with gigantic paintings; the choir is entirely of marble, and composed of

bas-reliefs of Bandinelli, the author of the Sabines; the high-altar is surmounted by a statue of *Piety*, that Michael Angelo had executed for his own tomb. From the Dome is suspended the Meridienne whose model was given by Paulo Toscanelli, the privy councillor of Christopher Columbus. On the doors of the sacristy, glitters the genius of Luc della Rabbia, the Florentine Bernard de Palissy. Behind this door did Lorenzo of Medici take refuge, when the Pazzi would have assassinated him. Poliziano, the friend of Lorenzo, was arrested sword in hand upon this bloody threshold. It is altogether so grand and so vast, so resplendent and sombre—there are so many hidden depths within this holy place, man is so small at the foot of these ancient pillars, so insignificant beneath this dome raised by mortal hands, that there is but one impulse—to kneel and pray to God—the God of Dante and Michael Angelo! Between the Cathedral and the Baptistry of Florence, Giotto has erected the Campanile, an admirable square tower of the finest German Gothic style. As much as the Tower of Pisa inclines, does that of Florence stand firm, erect, neat, and slender; no contrast can be more expressive. Grace, airy elegance, ornament, or simplicity of

carved stone, has never been more perfect. You involuntarily smile on beholding this charming little *chef-d'œuvre* placed there between these two grave monuments, as a pretty blonde, rosy infant between two venerable sages. The effect of the Campanile surpasses description. Charles V. naturally wished it to be put under glass; and, in effect, it seems as if the shade had been broken the evening before. To obtain a good view of the Campanile, place yourself opposite the street on whose end it stands; then, from this distance, advance slowly from behind the houses which conceal it, and you will see the light, delicate wall rising, chanting the *Angelus*.

Beautiful as the Campanile, is a Florentine proverb. The most excellent artists of Florence were eagerly emulous to adorn it. Donatello executed six statues for the Campanile, and Andrea, of Pisa, carved *bas-reliefs* for it, with Luc della Rabbia and Giotto. The latter is to be found everywhere, like Michael Angelo; he is at the Campo Santo as the restorer of painting; at the Cathedral, as master of Brunellesco. It is Giotto who alone erected the Campanile; for it he executed *bas-reliefs;* he wrought at the gates of the Baptistry; in fine, he accomplished, unaided, the work

of three men, each of whom would have required great genius for the performance of his part. And think, too, that all these excellent artists, whose names cannot be pronounced without respect mingled with admiration, amidst these incredible labors, went forth every morning to purchase their daily provisions in the market, and that it was one of their favorite customs to prepare their own repasts!

Well, beyond all doubt, all these great masters are pupils of Dante. They have obeyed only the inspiration of their poet; they have wrought but for him and the Republic; they have never known nor acknowledged the Medici. The thought of Dante has presided at the erection of all the great monuments of Florence; it has stirred the heart of all her illustrious men. Not only is he the father of Brunellesco, the inspirer of Arnolfo and Giotto, the master of Michael Angelo, he is moreover the inspirer of Petrarch, whom he taught, by his example, to love antiquity, and study it without servile imitation. In the school of his master, Petrarch became not merely a poet, but a scholar. His father was the friend of Dante, and, like him, a proscribed Ghibelline. He was the first master of his son in the town of Pisa, which had given

them hospitality; from thence they went to seek, at Avignon, the fugitive Papacy. It was the solemn advent into the world of the fair Laura, when were heard the first songs of troubadours. Like Dante, he commenced to write his verses in the language of Virgil and Horace, for these Italians were still Romans in mind and heart. Petrarch then abandons the Romans to return to Florence. He had studied, in their minutest details, the manners, usages, laws, and classic lore of the Roman nation. Petrarch lived for three passions only, which constituted his existence, science, travel, and love. As Dante had invoked Beatrice, so had he invoked Laura. Along with Petrarch arrives Boccaccio, the scoffer, sensualist, and amorous story-teller. Such are the works, such the men of Dante. Thanks to this poet, Florence ranks as the equal of Athens. Erase Dante from her history, take from the Republic this animating inspiration, and Florence is no more than the ephemeral rival of Carthage and of Tyre!

But in proclaiming the superiority of that mighty intellect, we are far from denying the influence of the Medici. They skilfully followed in the train of all the illustrious men and great ideas which the Florentine poet had cast along his route.

They wonderfully seconded the passion for the arts which Florence had by instinct, and that love of antiquity wherewith poets had inspired her. What a history to write, the history of these merchants who gave their name to an age, as had Pericles, as Louis XIV. was destined to do! And how fruitful is that history in alternate glory and defeat, in prosperity and misfortune! To narrate it properly, we should ascend as far as possible in the history of Italy. In the beginning, the trembling cities were absorbed in devising means of protection against the invasions of barbarians; then, gradually, necessity, the vicinity of the sea, and that passion for the unknown which incites nations as well as men, urges them to the very gates of Alexandria and Constantinople. Now behold our Italians enriched by commerce, and, with riches, imbibing an ardent desire of liberty.

At the head of these new movements of commerce and liberty, were the Lombards, naturally occupying that position by their intelligence and courage. Soon these scattered republics constituted themselves into communities of wealth, property, and commercial enterprise. And while towns were thus being established, for whom was in store the destiny of empires, great men were

arising to found, at the will of their genius, liberty or slavery, enlightened liberty or dark bondage. The Sforzi, the Bentivoglii, Pics of Mirandola, the Palentini, the Manfredi—these kings and gods, tyrants or saviours, whose names still live at Milan, Bologna, Vienna, and Ravenna—generous men, enlightened intellects, covetous of every species of renown, whose very vices had something poetic.

Among these illustrious families, the glory of modern Italy, in the first rank shone resplendently that of the Medici, masters of Florence. After long effort to obtain it, they finally died upon the throne which their noiseless ambition had reared. The first sovereign of that race of crowned merchants, Cosmo I., attained to power just as Italian genius emitted its supreme *eclat.* Happy in public affairs, this prince was unfortunate in his family. His daughter Maria was seduced by a page, and died of poison; his second, the beautiful Duchess of Ferrara, was assassinated by her husband; his son, Giovanni of Medici, the Cardinal, was poignarded by his brother, because of a roebuck for which they disputed—while on his side, the miserable father, to avenge the murder, kills the survivor with the sword; and then, too happy

was he, surrounded by these dead bodies, to relinquish the infant empire to his remaining son Francis. You know how this Cosmo I. perished. He was the lover of that celebrated Bianca Capella, whose history filled all Italy. She was a singular woman, of great beauty, and boundless ambition, who reached the throne by means of the prevailing disorders. Abducted from the paternal house by a young adventurer of Venice, she had taken refuge with her lover at Florence; but the fair Venitian was not so well concealed that the old Cosmo I., a prey to ennui and troubles, could not discover her. She had the grace of a Venitian, the animated classic fairness, the sweet accent, the frivolous mind, and changing heart of a Venitian. She sees this old prince, alone, and almost a widower, fascinated by her; and, though loving him not, she permits him to love her. Thus, she becomes mistress of Florence and its prince! Then, one day, as the lover with whom she had eloped wearied her, she had him murdered, and her prince being, by this time, wholly a widower, she wholly espouses him. Accordingly, great was the joy of Venice to see one of her daughters ascend the throne of Florence. *La Serenissima* Republic, on this event, wished to

adopt as her own that fair and illustrious fugitive, she sends, with extreme pomp, a deputation of her noblest and richest to represent her at this marriage, which cost Venice eight hundred thousand ducats. Now, behold Bianca a sovereign, but without posterity. What vows did she not make to all the saints of Florentine Paradise for an infant to reign after his father! But the fatal hour had struck; and moreover she had behind her a terrible spy, Cardinal Don Francis, the brother of Cosmo. One day that the Grand Duchess made a semblance *d'accoucher*, Don Francis walked up and down reading his breviary, and behold wherefore the Duchess failed in being the mother of a stout boy!

She next resolves to be avenged, and endeavors to poison Don Francis. Offering him a certain dish of which he was fond, he refuses it, which his brother Cosmo observing, "By heaven!" exclaims the Duke, "then I will taste it," presenting his plate at the same time; and Bianca, to avoid confessing her crime, poisons both her husband and herself. This horrible denouement to so agitated a career transpired in one of the beautiful villas that surround Florence; but the verdure, flowers,

and time, have obliterated these dreadful recollections.

And now remark in what an age appropriately appeared the great masters of painting, Titian (1477), Leonardo da Vinci (1520), Raffaelle (1519), Corregio (1534), Michael Angelo (1563). It was the reign of Tintoret, of Paul Veronese, of Giulio Romano, and of the elegant Andrea del Sarto, the honor of Florentine art.

It was, moreover, the auspicious epoch of Italy; peace and the arts were at work; and the ingenious Italians, governed by their natural princes, freely abandoned themselves to the double impetus. At the head of this progressive intelligence was Florence, then ruled by the fortunate family of Medici. The one at that time on the throne was a merchant of genius, sprung from the people, yet governing nobles. On attaining power, he opened his town to all the exiles of Constantinople, and the Greeks of the lower empire, who bore with them the philosophy and poetry of Greece. His successor obtained the title of *Father of his Country*—a glorious surname, which was nothing more. One of them was banished for his vices; another, *Lorenzo the Magnificent*, a kind of philosopher, full of grace and urbanity, the friend of Po-

litiano, and protector of Michael Angelo, was the father of Leo X., the King of Raffaelle.

And when we reflect that these men preserved as a patrimony the noble, sacred passion for the fine arts; that they arose during an epoch of luxury and pride; that they governed a people of sensualists, naturally inclined to poetry and art in all its forms; when we remember that, in these Italian towns, art was the only medium of testing fortune, good taste, mind, and genius; that it was universal, within and without the city, in the palace, in the temple, on the ramparts, at the sword-hilt—nay, even on the wood of the Prie Dieu and fauteuils—we shall finally comprehend how it was, that so many masterpieces, thus produced by the caprice of some, the genius of others, and for the common glory, still manifest such a degree of magnificence in these noble cities, some of which have retained but the name and immortal memory of all their splendid works.

It would require a large book to write what has often been attempted, not the history, but rather the biography of the Medici!

We leave that work to M. Thiers, that he may depict Cosmo de Medicis drawing all antiquity from its oblivion and its ruins. Cosmo sent sa-

vans into France, Italy, Germany, and the East, expressly to collect books scattered since the great shipwreck of the Roman world. It is thus that he prepared the Laurentinian Library, founded by Lorenzo the Magnificent, his grandson. This should be visited after seeing the Duomo of Florence, and the place of the Old Palace. Learned antiquity has nowhere remaining more sacred relics. It is Michael Angelo (*toujours lui!*) who commenced this sanctuary. The windows were designed by a pupil of Raffaelle. The Library contains only the rarest manuscripts, such as a Virgil of the fourteenth century, the Pandects taken by the Pisans at the siege of Amalfi, written by Tribonian himself. These are the five first books of the Annals of Tacitus, the most glorious conquest of Leo X.; a copy of the Decameron, by Boccaccio; the manuscript of Longus, embellished with the too-famous ink-spot of Paul Louis Couvier; the Familiar Epistles of Cicero, by the hand of Petrarch, who discovered in them an antique manuscript, and transcribed them with passion equal to that with which Jean-Jacques Rousseau copied the letters of Heloise; a Terence, copied by Poliziano from the pamphlets of that admirable Aretino, the man devoid of shame. And what

still! Amid these noble debris is placed the finger of Galileo—a sad relic! It is not in this rude bottle that you will find the finger of Galileo, that followed from earth the finger of God in the heavens.

It is especially in the Museum they have founded that we must seek the Medici; it is there that they have left the indelible traces of their transit over this land of Italy; it is there that they may be discovered in full glory—Leo X., Clement VII., and Lorenzo the Magnificent. In the Uffizzii, a gallery which has nothing of the majesty of our Louvre, you will discover, and not without emotion, many of the popular masterpieces which have enacted in the arts the same *rôle* with the *Æneid* and *Iliad* in letters. After traversing a long suite of antique busts, Nero, Augustus, Caligula, Junius, Agrippina, Tiberius, all the stupid, ferocious heroes of Suetonius, you find yourself in the midst of the sixteenth century; and *malgre vous*, however absorbed with ancient Florence, involuntarily compare these simple, graceful, melancholy marbles with the faultless *chefs-d'œuvre* of antiquity. Then, silently you pass on to survey the painting gallery. Here are Florentines, Venitians, Romans, and Genoese—among whom,

occasionally, shines Paul Veronese, supreme master, or else it is Titian that illumines the shade with his soft radiance. Further onward, other statues arrest the eye, antique or modern bronzes — Victory, Hercules, Bacchus; then Etruscan vases; then portraits, many Holbeins, and the portrait of Philip IV. by Velasquez; a Brutus of Michael Angelo; a sketch. A maker of Latin verses has pretended that Michael Angelo did not finish this work, because Brutus slew Cæsar; to which an Englishman has replied in other Latin verses, that the great artist was arrested by the exalted idea he had of Brutus. Michael Angelo feared neither Brutus nor Cæsar. Egypt even has thrust into this museum her rude monuments and shapeless papyrus. An entire hall is consecrated to portraits of celebrated painters, executed by themselves. In general, these portraits are unworthy of the heads they represent, and of the names which have signed them. Raffaelle is pale and listless; his handsome features are reproduced with unparalleled nonchalance. Titian wears a fatigued air; Michael Angelo is sad. Andrea del Sarto, in the way of portraits, could only paint that of his wife. Scarcely could you recognize Paul Veronese; Domenichino is nothing more than

a weeping monk; Holbein has barely bestowed time enough to cover the wood on which he has painted himself. Angelica Kaufman has represented herself as a beautiful Mignonne, smiling, and richly attired. Ah! the portrait of Leonardo da Vinci is admirable! This, at least, is faithful! But, silence! we now enter the sacred place—into the Tribune—the *sanctum sanctorum* of the fine arts!

The tribune of the Florence Gallery is celebrated; it is arranged with a certain innocent charlatanism which may be willingly pardoned; the cupola is of mother-of-pearl; the pavement of precious marble. The temple is worthy of the god who inhabits it. Underneath this roof, in effect, live and breathe the Venus of Cleomenes, the Little Apollo, the Fawn, the Grinder, and the Wrestlers. They are surrounded by the Virgin of Michael Angelo, two Venuses of Titian, and many masterpieces of Paul Veronese, Van Dyke, Andrea del Sarto, and Raffaelle.

I confess that, at first, in presence of such *chefs-d'œuvre*, one of which would be the glory of a city, my very heart was stirred within me. Scarcely can you venture a whisper for fear that all these naked divinities will vanish from sight.

The Venus, a beauty, long buried and discovered without arms, is surely a perfect marble, but it is only a marble. Not a defect in that beautiful statue, but on the contrary, at each contour, a new grace—what feet! what stature! what a charming little head! what a perfect form! But, we repeat, it is but a marble. The attitude of this young woman, unveiled, and conscious of it, is painful. We cannot admit that Venus, in Olympus, could suspect that she was naked. If so, then Venus must have been the most unhappy of goddesses. But the Apollo!—he dreams not of his nudity, nor does the spectator think of it. Moreover, even in her faultless beauty, this Venus is cold and passionless; she perfectly resembles those admirable fair personages whom every one observes, yet no one loves. What a contrast this statue presents to the two exquisite forms of Titian! Here are living creatures!—life, flesh, beauty! It was demanded of Titian, where he found his models? "Everywhere," replied he; and, in proof, he placed before him his brother, a gross, stout man, and from thence composed the most beautiful of his two Venuses. The Apollo is a complete pendant to the Venus; it represents a small, frail, slender young man formed in a

mould. The Dancing Fawn is adorable—vivacious, light, coquettish, mischievous, mocking, amorous, and charming. There is nothing here so fine as the marble group of the Two Wrestlers; every muscle is in motion, every tendon at work—the veins, nerves, bones, hands, feet, body—all are agitated; the head alone remains calm. The Grinder, which we have so frequently admired in the Garden of the Tuileries, is probably the most beautiful marble which antiquity has left us.

It is strange to see beside the reclining Venus of Titian, the portrait of a Cardinal by the same Titian; and beside La Fornarina the mistress of Raffaelle, the portrait of Julius II. by the same Raffaelle. There is also a St. John the Baptist by Leonardo da Vinci, a Virgin of Corregio, and a Charles V. of Vandyke. Here, Charles is no longer master of the Spanish dominions; he is not even the monk of Aranjuez; he walks, with uncovered head, on the shore of the noisy sea. And, finally, there is a St. John the Baptist of Raffaelle. It is certainly the same St. John whose sale I witnessed among the effects of the Duke de Maille! Cruel precipitation, thus to barter the relics of the dead! And this sold picture belonged to the gallery of the Louvre, which has failed to discover

it! The figure of St. John is young and true, the landscape dark, the painting faded. The two pictures bear an ominous resemblance for two possessors; one is beyond doubt a copy, but as certainly a copy of Raffaelle.

As a completion to the countless riches of the gallery of the Uffizzii, there is the incredible reunion of designs of the greatest masters from Giotto down to modern times. There is also a collection of moneys and medals, from the heavy money of the Etruscan to the gold florin, that beautiful coin, once so admired by the rest of Europe, and nearly disappeared from Florence. And, finally, there is the accumulation of precious bijoux, so well adapted to turn the heads of all the feminine majesties of the world—rings, necklaces, rare caskets, gold buttons, chests of ebony, ivory or crystal bracelets—inestimable marvels, wherewith the fair dames of the sixteenth century embellished their fingers, arms, hands, ears, and superb brows.

In this brilliant corner of the gallery reigns Benvenuto Cellini, the Florentine goldsmith, as sovereign master. He was, at the same time, a goldsmith, an armorer, iron-monger, statuary, and still a great artist and a bandit. The first of all

the men of Florence to excel in the arts, Benvenuto Cellini abused his genius, making it the relaxation of certain privileges of fortune. This man has exhausted more grace, art, and invention, in a buckle for the mantle of Francis I. or the Medici, than would have sufficed for a statue like the Perseus. Any pretext served to occupy his rare talent—the hilt of a sword, the handle of a dagger, a lady's ewer, or the habit of a cavalier. In this subaltern *métier*, he wasted his genius while injuring his art. When you see art thus degenerating, and artists thus forgetting their mission, be assured the decadence of that people is at hand. And, in effect, at the time that Benvenuto Cellini commences, there is no longer a Florentine Republic. Michael Angelo is dead; the voice of Dante, which had reverberated for three centuries, is silent; Petrarch has given place to his three imitators, and Boccaccio is no longer esteemed but as a frivolous tale-teller—he, the accomplished rival of Petrarch! There is no more great art; no great poetry; there are no more great monuments for Florence. It is the fatal hour of corruption in manners and laws among the people, and with the nobles. Alexander VI., and his worthy daughter Lucretia—and the lover of that Lucretia,

Cardinal Bembo—the licentious, impure Petrarch, are, at this epoch, masters of Italian poetry. It is the time of frivolous satires, of obscene recitals, and amorous comedies. Machiavelli himself descends from the elevation of history to indulge in these *spirituelle* frivolities. Thus it was, till at length came into the world, if not to purify all these gallantries, at least to ridicule them, Ariosto, the merry skeptic and great poet, from whom Voltaire has borrowed his verses, to commit the most wicked, but also the most ingenious of attempts.

What a singular mind had this Ariosto! What must have been the universal astonishment of grave Italy, as she listened to that poetry which convulsed her with laughter! Imagine him, this enthusiastic railer, young, handsome, brilliant, rich in his apparel, amorous as a fool, sarcastic as a sage, fearlessly casting, here and there, the keenest sallies of his heart and soul! He dipped profoundly into the poetic spring, and sprinkled all who thirsted for its beneficent wave. A great writer in frivolous romance—a poet in exaggerated recital, a wit and man of genius at all times—he charmed entire Italy, and dazzled her with his thousand flashes of diamonds, opals, and

amethysts. Ariosto is the Voltaire of an age which still clings to its religious creeds, the harmless Voltaire, happy to exist, to be in the world, devoid of envy, malice, or cruelty, free from ambition, content with little, and proud, in the very zenith of his triumph, to build himself a house as small as that of Socrates, expressly to inscribe on the fronton two admirable Latin verses, of which the following is the sense: "The house is small, but convenient. It intercepts the sun from no one. It is sufficiently elegant for him who inhabits it, and, moreover, it has been paid for with his own money."

Such was the dazzling man who was to absorb Raffaelle in his brilliant light; for, in reality, it is through Ariosto that Raffaelle escapes from the influence of Dante. Immediately on leaving the school of the severe Perugino his master, the young Raffaelle, reared in all the austerity of Florentine art, represents in a picture Dante and Savonarola, the first gods of his imagination, the heroes of antique Florence; but soon, when he had penetrated to the court of Leo X., among that elegant people of scoffers and jesters, and when he had encountered the enchanter Ariosto—behold! Raffaelle bids adieu forever to Dante and

his doctrines, to ancient Florence, to republican sentiments, to catholic simplicity, to philosophic theology, of which Michael Angelo had been the sculptor, Brunellesco the architect, and, but for Ariosto, himself the painter! What must have been the grief of Dante, when, from his paradise on high, he beheld Raffaelle escaping from him!—Raffaelle abandoning Christian austerity for profane mythology!—Raffaelle lending to holy Virgins the earthly beauty of his fair mistresses!—Raffaelle placing, at the Vatican, between Homer and Dante, Ariosto himself, the volatile, sarcastic genius, who would have affrighted old Michael Angelo as a monster!

Time fails me to descant any further now of that admirable Florentine school which has produced so many masterpieces, or to describe the Pitti Palace, the tombs of the Medici, and modern Florence, which I have thoroughly explored. Again, the past has superseded the present! *Pardonnez-moi!*

CHAPTER III.

THE PITTI PALACE—IMPERIAL POGGIO—PRINCESS MATHILDE—BONAPARTE—MACHIAVELLI.

Adieu, then, Florence! Florence, the republican and royal! Florence, the catholic and excommunicated! Adieu, most liberal of cities, who hast sustained alone the burden of thy passions, thy prejudices, animosities, and varied dissensions, while casting abroad, with exhaustless hand, eldest daughter of Europe, thy sciences, thy institutions, thy poetry, and fine arts! Adieu, then, thou admirable and admired!—who, at thy risk and peril, hast taught future nations how to rend asunder the yoke of tyrants; how to found liberty; how a great people may exercise, at the same time, war and commerce; how, by force of genius, to replace lost power—poor, yet rich Florence! most courageous and generous of cities, who hast, with thine own hands, rent thy bowels in laborious efforts to attain liberty, honor, a future in the world! She has been the first to

divine all those institutions and sciences of which we moderns are so proud! As Dante first pointed to the cross of the south, so had she her citizen army, her magistrates elected by the people. She was the first to separate the two powers—till then indissoluble among nations—Church and State—the first to be learned, eloquent, and elegant; then, finally, all these destinies accomplished, she deposits her arms, descends from her throne of wool and gold, closes at once her citadel and counting-house, and inscribes in her Pantheon the three great names of her history—Dante, Michael Angelo, and Galileo. As much as she was once turbulent and impassioned, is she now calm and tranquil; she has all the dignity of defeat, as she had all the glory of combat; and even as she had lived first among intelligent nations, so also was she the first to succumb; but what a glorious defeat! how grand in her abasement! how beautiful in death! and with what sacred respect do they come from all parts of the universe to contemplate her lying in her magnificent tomb!

Yes, it is in visiting Florence that you especially comprehend and divine the respect awarded to great men who are no more. These mute ruins; this matchless refulgence, which is but the

reflection of past times; these empty palaces, with echo devoured by silence; this universe of sculptured stones, no longer inhabited but by *chefs-d'œuvre*, whose life is eternal!—all this strikes you with unspeakable admiration. There remains to this great city only the soul which animates it; its tenement, the body, has vanished forever. Strangers are come to people this desert—foreign princes, citizens, magistrates, foreign soldiers, and artists; but all of them have the consciousness of the grandeur they replace. They retreat as far as practicable to admire, at leisure, the corpse of Florence; to hear the last accents of her intelligence and genius! They are the motionless inhabitants of a dead town; invisible kings within a destroyed republic; exiles of all parts and all opinions of the world, who arrange themselves for a day amid these Guelph and Ghibelline ruins, without discerning their hidden meaning; whose eyes see nothing in these museums; whose ears hear naught in these mighty sounds; whose hands touch nothing amid this decay; whose feet encounter not one of the one hundred thousand beaten paths that intersect this dust—phantoms to replace the populace, and noble Signors, merchants and soldiers, poets and goldsmiths of

Florence! Ah! it is what I love! I love that tacit respect for such a city; a respect so profound, that not one of those who inhabit or govern it any longer dares to say, "I am a citizen of Florence!" I love that admiration so sincere, that no one in this marble town dares any more to regard even her ruins, but treat her, the abode of miracles, as an ordinary place, wherein to eat, drink, sleep, and pass, without presuming to be born or to die on that soil which has borne or produced so many giants—an extinguished volcano, upon which not a mother dare place the cradle of her son, a child the tomb of his father! Have you seen a chariot passing there? It proceeds noiselessly; you hear not even the hoof of the horse at full speed. It is the image of the new society, formed beneath the shade of the Campanile of Giotto; the history of the new power that has glided between the horse of Cosmo and the Venus de Medicis.

Moreover, in laying aside all this ill-restrained enthusiasm, life is so happy, so calm and tranquil, so joyous and easy at Florence! There is within these appeased walls, under the shadow of the throne, deposited there without violence, as might be borne a velvet seat into a garden, so much

sun, freshness, and repose, that truly, were the Archangel to appear with his trump, to awaken Dante and Michael Angelo, and with them the varied passions which composed their retinue, we would be tempted to say to him, "Silence! in mercy to us! Arouse not all these extinct grandeurs till we are no more! This age, in effect, is no longer so young, enthusiastic, and devoted, as to assist even remotely in the revolutions which have arisen in this place. Silence, then!—awake not these turbulent and magnanimous dead! Let us live in peace, under the shadow of the palaces they have reared, the sciences they have founded; and believe me, like the swine of the Scripture, sated with acorns, let us not raise the head to regard the tree whence the fruit has fallen.!"

Accordingly, despite my resolution to see nothing in Florence but herself, to belong entirely to the great debris which I wished to study in detail, I irresistibly yielded to the double inertia which pervades the town. I passed from the solemn silence of the libraries to the chattering silence of the promenades; went from the museum to the ball, from the public place to the ducal palace; and intermingled the three weeks of my sojourn with concerts, dinners, and historic studies.

I involuntarily passed from the cathedral to the theatre, from the Campanile to the Corso, from the tomb of Machiavelli to the court-gala. I have culled, at once, both brambles and flowers; listened, at the same time, to the *Divina Commedia* and the *Orlando Furioso*. I have prostrated myself at the feet of Christian, and walked arm in arm with profane Florence. I have pursued, with my respectful admiration, the holy Beatrice, and drunk from the cup of Bianca Capella quaffed by Montaigne—and talked of love with Madam Fiametta and Madam Pampinee, the heroines of Boccaccio. I have had paroxysms of incredible sadness, and moments of joy approaching delirium. I have seen passing before me all kinds of apparitions, shrouded in funeral crape, or crowned with roses; in the morning on the ramparts, in the evening beneath them, I have been, by turns, an Italian of the sixteenth, a German of the nineteenth century; and in thy grandeur as in thy ruins, in thy past prosperity and thy present abasement, in thy mighty din of other days and in thy actual silence, in thy life and death, thy palaces and tombs, I have ever found thee grand and fair, O Florence! and worthy our utmost enthusiasm, gratitude, and respect.

To narrate all that I have felt and learned in these three weeks of my life, is impossible. To recall it all, will require months of recollection. Much more leisure is necessary than is supposed to arrange such visions with some order and method. For instance, when scarcely awake, I would repair to the Hall of Lancers, and from thence to witness the first movements within the Duomo; then to salute the Venus and Apollo; and next hasten to the Pitti Palace, entering it as if it were my own dwelling. This is the residence of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. It connects with the Old Palace by an immense covered gallery; but that is the only analogy between them. The Pitti Palace is the finest in Florence—conclusive evidence of its splendor. It consists, with all the rest of these illustrious houses, of one grand dark wall, whose compact stones seem to unite together with incredible determination. Some of them jut menacingly from the surface, while others, on the contrary, recede inwardly, giving to the immovable mass an admirable variety. M. Delecluze, with his good sense and unequalled science, has discovered the history of the first of the Pitti family; and it is a very similar biography to that of all the noted citizens of Flo-

rence, including the Medici. This Pitti was originally a poor, petty merchant, who travelled to Venice, driving a horse before him. When commerce was unpropitious, our man played at cards and dice, where his good luck verges on dishonesty. He falls ill at Pisa, and, at the point of expiring on the pallet of a wretched inn, a troop of Bohemians passes along, who cure him by making him dance and drink. Scarcely recovered, he plays, wins, and buys six horses. He next becomes enamoured of a married woman, who sends him, not to the devil, but to Rome, which was the same thing in those days. He obeys the lady, goes to Rome, and what is more, returns, and the dame laughs in his face. As a consolation, he becomes a ranting politician, and, in the heat of a dispute, kills a fellow-citizen with the sword. Banished from Florence as a Guelph, he puts himself at the head of a troop of exiles to force an entrance into the city. The defender of the town encounters and makes him prisoner. Monsieur Pitti was about to be hung, when he escapes by a stratagem. Then, seeing that the air of Florence was unfavorable to him, he goes to try his fortune at Brussels. As he had the reputation of being a fine player, the Duke of

Brabant said to him, "Dance and play, Lombard, and fear not for the rest!" Accordingly, the Lombard dances, plays, and loses—the Duke pays his debts. From Brussels, Pitti repairs to England, to treat concerning the ransom of John of Brabant. In the month of November, he was at the battle of Rosbecque, in the train of Oliver Clisson, notwithstanding all his sympathies (*de lui Pitti!*) for Arteveld. He was also at the capture of Mons, with one Lucquois for a friend, and thirty-six cavaliers for a troop; he lost there his thirty-six cavaliers, and his friend the Lucquois. Afterwards, still in the service of Charles VI., Pitti freights a vessel of war; wins, from the Count of Savoy, thirty-five thousand gold francs; then goes to Florence, and marries. He next returns to Paris, and enters the household of the Duke of Orleans, brother to the King. He sells three horses to the Duke of Burgundy, and with the money purchases one hundred and ten tuns of Burgundy wine, and gains a thousand percentage therefrom. The same day, being at play in the house of the Duke of Orleans, he is insulted by one of the stoutest Seigneurs of France, and fiercely demands satisfaction from the noble; the affair requires the intervention of the King. In

Germany, the emperor commissions Pitti to treat for him respecting the loan of one hundred thousand ducats from the Venitians. Thus, by playing, winning, selling, buying men, vessels, soldiers, horses, Burgundy wine, and arranging loans, he returns to his country rich, and therefore important. After intrusting him with many magistracies, the Florentine Republic nominates him ambassador to the Holy Father. They next send him to France, to solicit of the King the liberty of two Florentines; he arrives in time to witness the assassination of the Duke of Orleans. Ambassador as he was, Pitti still games, and wins five hundred crowns. On his return to Florence, he is elected Consul of the Art of Wool, then Captain of the Pisan Guard, then to the Council of Ten, and in these various positions he still continues a banker—he lends, exchanges, buys, sells, games, urges his fortune, intrigues, and thus founds that almost royal family by whom this splendid palace was erected, which Catherine de Medicis remembered when constructing the Luxembourg, which, however, is a very faint, remote, inexact counterpart of the Pitti Palace.

In this edifice, built by money-lenders, is contained one of the finest museums of Europe.

There are *chefs-d'œuvre*, selected from among others and by the greatest connoisseurs. They occupy these vast saloons as the only place worthy of them. Strange! once entered, you feel no embarrassment, assured of your enthusiasm. How shall I enumerate them! There is a Venus of Titian, more beautiful than the two of the Tribune; this Venus is placed under a ceiling of Paul Veronese. There is a Judith of Allori, that admirable person, so serene, yet so resolved; certainly the painter Allori had there a fair but terrible mistress. There are twenty pictures of Andrea del Sarto, a kind of Titian, full of caprice and imagination. An Ezekiel of Rembrandt—you may judge of this picture by the engraving Rembrandt has made of it; it is as fine as the Bible and the Prophets. There are portraits of Van Dyke and Rubens, a Battle of Michael Angelo, the Three Parcæ of Leonardo da Vinci—and what women! I can only compare this terrible poem to a lost Magdalen in the gallery of the School of Fine Arts at Florence. That Magdalen is half clothed, in tatters, swarthy, wrinkled, and wan; you can scarcely divine that she has been beautiful; and it is manifest that she has witnessed mortifications, fasting, abandonment, and poverty;

and that she has passed through the slowest and most terrible degradations of body and soul. Behold a true Magdalen, and not that *fille de joie* with bare neck, blonde hair, and plump hands, so often exhibited. Then also, in fine, there is at the Pitti Palace, beside the portrait of Leo X., the most beautiful, the calmest, the most transparent, the most admirable—pardon me, Heaven, if I blaspheme—the most profane of the Madonnas of Raffaelle!

Such is the exhibition which may be seen every day and at all hours in this hospitable palace, open to every comer, at the time even when the Grand Duke dines with his family behind a screen, to impose no restraint on visitors.

Issuing from the palace, the daily fête awaits you—for every day, in Florence, is assuredly a festival. You dine at a table covered with fruits and flowers. After dinner, is the promenade of the Cassino, a charming peninsula formed by the Arno. It resembles the Champ Elysèes, but more calm and rural. Sheep and cows graze in these sweet meads; on the trees perches the golden pheasant. Every one arrives there in a carriage; the sovereign himself is of the company; they regard each other, salute, exchange a thousand

smiles from a distance, and repose as if they had toiled all the day. It is really the hour when the women are fair and serene—when, in effect, Italian life commences. But, let them enjoy it, these Italian rustics, for, in an instant, every evening at a signal given suddenly, that fair crowd disperses. They return to the city in full speed, brush carelessly, in passing, the Feroni Palace, in other times a redoubtable Bastile, now a lodging-house, whose very turrets are inhabited by honest idlers. Hasten—see, in the lower saloon, a vender of sherbet, who has replaced the armed chief of the house; observe, on the Cathedral Place, all that noble company, pausing to listen to an improvisator. Onward!—quick!—the opera commences—the house is dazzling with light and ornament—every box is a small saloon for laughing and talking, for they hearken little even to accomplished singers. What a murmur of ingenious flatteries, sparkling gallantries, and well-told tales! In these almost private chatting coteries of a whole city, the Italian genius is still evident; you readily discover the jocular caprice of the ancient story-tellers; the sensual gallantry, faintly disguised beneath the transparent veil of the disciples of Plato. These artless Italians call themselves accomplished musicians,

and really believe that they love this great art, and yet they scarcely listen to what the performers are saying! What care they for comedian, dancing, music, singer, or dramatic excitement? They are their own comedians, dancers, musicians, and singers. Why should they pay artists to sell them artificial passion? They, themselves, have passion to dispose of.

Thus passes the hour devoted to the opera. Scarcely does the curtain fall ere they eagerly repair to the ball. Each of these antiquated mansions is suddenly illuminated from every window, the doors are open, no one is specially invited, the privilege is universal; young or old, handsome or ugly, prince or clown, all men are equal before that eternal Florence festival. Immediately on entering these benevolent saloons, you are in the midst of Boccaccio's recitals. Prince, marquis, Count, all leave their titles at the door with their mantles. The nonchalant Italians become animated at the sound of this music, and surrender themselves body and soul to the waltz, whoever be the waltzer. Yes, and they are really beautiful, though negligent, carelessly attired, without the aid of art or studied elegance; sometimes without taste, and never gracefully. I say it,

with no desire to offend them, that these fair Italians are the least coquettish women in Europe. Such as the good God has made them do they appear, without disguising anything, neither adding nor suppressing aught to deceive their lovers, whom they frankly distinguish, or from their husbands, from whom they conceal nothing! And if you could witness their moderation in enjoyment—their calm happiness! All our romance writers have lied when they have told us of the *dishevelled* passion of Italy. A passion is only dishevelled when extraordinary; how should that which is a daily sentiment be so denominated. Thus let them enjoy themselves, therefore, in the artless indulgence of that transparent happiness which springs from their inmost soul, as the sparkle of the glowworm hidden beneath the rose-leaf! There is nothing among us comparable to a Florence ball or festival. Our fair Parisians themselves—yes, our Paris ladies, those beautiful, elegant, charming, dissimulating creatures, with the best arranged toilets in the world, the most perfect coquettes, with their soft whisper, ironic smile, form so flexible, foot so delicate, what would they do if suddenly transported among artless women, who dance, amuse themselves, and

love as naturally as they breathe, and know nothing beyond!

This perpetual fête of Florence, though never-failing, yet varies infinitely. It takes all forms, borrows all costumes, appropriates every place—to-day in the choir of the Duomo, to-morrow at the Cassino. When I arrived there they told me sadly—if anything could be spoken sadly in that happy city—"you are come too late, all the fêtes are over"—and yet what a succession of them in a few days! His imperial and royal Highness, the Grand Duke Leopold, gave a ball at the Pitti Palace, and another at the Poggio. Imagine the court of Ammonato, surmounted by a murmuring fountain, lighted by a thousand candles, and those purified gardens, which still recall Cosmo I., the lover of Bianca Capella, Isabella his daughter, and his son Don Francis. As to the imperial Poggio, imagine the Petit Trianon buried in woods. You find a long suite of lighted galleries, and enter a vast hall, or rather garden, filled with dancing and melody. In the midst of the fête, affable to all, a joyous participator in the happiness that surrounds him, walks the prince with his wife and daughter. The assembly is a charming mixture of princes and citizens, great ladies

and young girls; there is no constitutional kingdom where there is such unrestrained liberty in pleasure. But this freedom is not devoid of reserve and decorum. The slow and capricious promenade in these softly illumined gardens resembles that of happy souls in the Elysium of Fenelon. Listen, spectator, and you may hear the slightest word whispered in these groves. Meanwhile, beside the fountains, or at the foot of the white statues which detach themselves from the somewhat intrusive shade of the orange-trees, a crowd of assiduous attendants serve the guests with French wines, iced fruits, and pheasants of the Cassino. And no one is astonished, no one asks the occasion of this fête. Florence, once so turbulent, at present is curious about nothing, not even her pleasures.

In the morning, as a refreshment, there is a *déjeuner* in the house of Prince Jerome Bonaparte, formerly King of Westphalia. Among the Florentine ruins, shines with mournful éclat the family of the emperor, still French, even in the heart of Florence; the only family which she has not subdued. They have adopted her joyous life, and perfect oblivion of ambition. Florence loves these exiled Bonapartes, as she has ever cherished all exiles—

she, whose history was so long one of proscriptions and banishments. Prince Jerome accordingly gives his *fête*, to which he had invited the Bourbons of Naples and Bourbons of Spain—and they had come. We encountered at the house of Prince Jerome, and not without emotion, a young Bonaparte, fair and blooming, free from ambition, with no regret save for her country. This Bonaparte is charming and inoffensive as the other was powerful and terrible. It is impossible to be fairer and more perfectly beautiful than the Princess Mathilde Bonaparte. She received us with all the ingenuous grace of scarce eighteen years—not as an exiled princess, but like a fair young Parisian girl, forgotten on the shores of the Arno. She did the honors of her house with perfect elegance—with as much ease and modesty as if inhabiting the chateau of the Tuileries. After the repast, she danced like a simple Italian, and was graceful and charming. What a pity to bury under that great name this scion of blood so noble! and how should France regret a pearl of such fine water fallen from the imperial crown!

Then, there were concerts, suppers, endless processions, horse-races, chariot-races, antique chariots, and Roman charioteers in the costume of

the circus, and brilliant illuminations. For the Feast of St. John, the Arno was illuminated with inexhaustible fireworks; barques freighted with lights and singers; comedies by amateurs; an entire opera, sung in admirable style by the Prince and Princess P., young persons full of graceful whim, who left a great name at the door of the theatre, to become only excellent artists. I should never end were I to enumerate all the hours consecrated to Florentine festivals. Moreover, to complete that spirit of universal enjoyment, there are people of all nations commingled in the pleasure, which changes according to taste and humor, each contending who can be most lively. But they are no longer English, Germans, French, nor Russians—they are all Florentines.

And how is it possible to resist such invitations as this: *La Contessa * * * darà nel suo giardino un piccolo trattenimento musicale, nelle sere di lunedi* 25 *giugno, e dei mercoledi* 11 *e* 18. And the music was divine! and the garden was softly lighted! and the women were charming! and the palace was built by Raffaelle!—and in the height of the *fête* more than one young dancer disappeared; he went to disguise himself with a black cowl, and then flew to the succor of some poor

dying man! Admirable benevolence! concealing itself as if it were a crime, or love! Frequently, in leaving these brilliant assemblies, you will encounter an order of mercy thus attired, bearing a dead body to its last asylum, lighted only by one funeral torch. Then suddenly, the illusion dispelled, you bid adieu to frivolous, amorous, gallant Florence, to return to sad and serious Florence. You flee far away from the Florence of Boccaccio, intoxicated with pleasure, to trace the Florence of Dante; for this town evidently appertains to two opposite geniuses, to two different muses, to two passions, which follow not the same route. You will recognize both one and the other, the city of Dante and the city of Ariosto; the Florence of the *Divina Commedia*, and that of ludicrous poems and licentious stories; the one stern even in her pleasures, the other joyous in the midst of her despair, and who, in the very height of the pestilence of 1438, could invent charming recitals of love.

I have more than once gone to Santa Maria Novella in the morning, recalling to mind that, beneath this gilded dome, in this cloister adorned with paintings, was the appointed rendezvous of the seven fair dames of the Decameron: "Their

ages were from eighteen to twenty-seven years; all, after the service, would retire to a corner of the church, and form a circle to discuss the news of the day." I sought in vain the seven fair dames, but I found in their place a young man who was vending the *crème de beauté*—a final image of that profane Florence which converted the church into a boudoir!

But in good truth, it is not after sportive, joyous Florence he should pursue who goes for a little time to Italy, but he must contemplate her as the austere, poetic, believing Republic—the city of Dante and Michael Angelo! Behold the worthy object of our admiration and study!—behold true Florence! Believe me, young men, let Boccaccio forget himself in the frivolous recitals of which La Fontaine has robbed him, and even in the midst of the pestilence be grave and serious. Moreover, this is not the time to rejoice and sing. Let the young Italians and their fair mistresses thus live from day to day in the precepts of their amorous poets. But, would you understand aright this great city, follow the man who issues from his house one morning during the pestilence of 1527. He, who takes even the scourge in earnest here, is Nicola Machiavelli. No frivolous recitals

now, no more banquets, *fêtes*, nor fair dames, but a profound, austere grief. The old Florentine traverses silently the unfortunate city, filled with mendicants, robbers, and grave-diggers. He passes by San Miniato, where recently the wool-carders made so great a tumult. It is silent and deserted. Santa Maria Novella, the Church of the Decameron, is full of biers. Santa Reparata, the Cathedral, contains only three priests, one saying mass, another chanting and playing the organ, the third, in fine, with hands and feet chained (a precaution used when the confessor was young and the penitent fair), was at the confessional. To listen to the mass thus chanted, there were in the side chapels three wrinkled, limping old women, and three devotees on crutches. Where, then, were the people of Florence? Occupied in dying, or in interring their dead! And this, too, was the first day of May! At this hour, the past year, young maidens sang on the place of Santa Cruce, "Hail, month of May!" Now, the grave-diggers cry, "Long live the pestilence!"

This was all that this stern sage encountered on his way; only in the midst of the tombs he discovers a young woman, pale and afflicted; bitter tears furrowed her fair cheeks; she tore

her black hair—smote her breast and face!—her lover was dead! "Miserable, imprudent woman," exclaimed Machiavelli, "wherefore thus weep a lover?—hast thou no discretion, no decency?" But she replied, "My lover! my lover!—away with modesty and duty—let me weep!" From thence Machiavelli proceeds to the church of Lo Spirito Santo; the brothers there, regardless of the service, walked boldly about the sacred place blaspheming. In the middle of the street, he finds a dead body, whom none cared to remove. Throughout that whole funeral course, he encounters but one man devoid of fear. "Why art thou here?" said he to this man. "Because I have a wife in Florence, whom I love." They separate. It was four in the afternoon when Machiavelli returns to Santa Maria Novella, and there he observes on the steps of the altar a woman of perfect beauty, overwhelmed with grief. She was a widow, and now lamented because she had only to die!

Such is this lugubrious picture, and certainly I prefer it a thousand times to the introduction of the Decameron. In these melancholy pages, shines still Florence of olden times. No!—no *fêtes*, no flowers, dances, banquets—no more love

for Florence! In her pleasures and blooming coronal, she is but wrapped in her shroud. To view her aright, contemplate her, not like Boccaccio, but as did Machiavelli—poor, sad, desolate, and beautiful even in her abandonment and sorrow, and "refusing to be comforted, because that now she is alone in the world, and has but to die!"

CATHEDRAL OF MILAN.

I FOUND myself in presence of the Cathedral. It was the hour of noon. A blazing sun fell in perpendicular rays on that mountain of white marble, and my dazzled vision could but dimly distinguish what was passing on its arid summits. It was a strange illusion, to which language is inadequate; for in that brilliant light, I surely saw climbing and descending that carved mountain of festoons, lozenges, and arcades, a promiscuous crowd of men and angels, demons and martyrs, virgins and courtezans, penetrating the forest of spires, between the menacing towers, Gothic arches, pillars, and ogival *bas-reliefs*, in prayer or blasphemy, kneeling or traversing every part of the lofty precipice. It was a scene of complete, terrific disorder, wholly incredible. They passed to and fro, assumed the most various postures, spake all manner of tongues, as in the Tower of Babel. Such is the Cathedral of Milan,

the Tower of Babel! A firm, intelligent hand cast the foundations, the primitive Christians deposited those noble stones. In those days, architect and mason, with heart and hand—believing heart and Christian hand—associated themselves for life to raise to God a holy temple which should recount to future ages the fervid zeal of the first believers. The commencement develops the noblest fantasies and austerest inspirations of ancient Catholic genius. But the temple advanced slowly, while time sped swiftly. The first walls had devoured many generations of architects when there arose on the soil of Florence the celebrated great movement in which Gothic art is replaced by the modern. Then hastened to the Dome of Milan all the illustrious artists of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, and behold a new, marble nation, climbing far above the primitive—a light, elegant people, who, with young, disdainful foot mount the shoulders of the first apostles, already covered with greenish moss of olden time. Then, by degrees, the *renaissance* retires, making way for a novelty more scientific, less holy. Raffaelle replaces Michael Angelo, Ariosto dethrones Dante. The Dome partakes of this new revolution to the very foundations. Once again the marble

creation changes its modes and costumes! But yesterday, and there was faith in these marbles; to-day, doubt has penetrated even their breasts of stone, and, with doubt, conflict, and resistance. Martin Luther casts his revolt even upon these inanimate blocks! Meanwhile, at the foot of the high towers, on the earth which bears them, multifarious revolutions are in agitation—conquerors of every order are passing, crying "Victory!" Still, the sacred wall continues to ascend; with every new conqueror and new passion that reigns supreme, a new statue rises aloft, redolent of the pride, the hopes, and vanity of the victor. The generation that commenced this work are now alone forbidden to inscribe on the Dome their fears, their hopes, deceptions, praise, or censure; it is only for conquerors to dare to speak from these heights; each man in armor, as he passes over the marble, draws his sabre, and converting it into a chisel, himself sculptures a statue in his own image and eulogy. Thus were created the four thousand statues that surcharge the Dome of Milan. Napoleon Bonaparte is the last who has wrought on that mountain. And how can such a work, the sport of such varied caprice,

be grand and complete? How is it possible to understand any part of a book wherein every mortal hand has attempted to write a line, immediately interrupted by a new comer demanding his turn? Where shall we find a guide through such a labyrinth? or penetrate these dim vistas? comprehend aught in this universal *tohubohu* of the diversified styles, ages, passions, systems, victories, and dreams of Italy? The honor of the Cologne Cathedral, for example, consists in the incompleteness of its original design, the structure remaining at its first colonnades rather than change architects. What distinguishes the Duomo of Florence is, that the illustrious artists of the same school who commenced, also crowned the edifice. Unity is the life of great monuments, as it is of great nations, and therefore is it that on this Milan marble, black at its base and white at its summit, among this army of statues with no connecting link, the stern daughters of Gothic art, the capricious offspring of *Renaissance*, the unskilful imitation of antique sculpture, and the desperate efforts of modern art, nothing can be recognized in this complete, remediless confusion, but the scattered leaves of all kinds of miserably interrupted poems—*Disjecti membra poetæ*.

Such, meanwhile, is the illusion produced by these works on which entire generations have expended toil—such the privilege of architecture, the great art which rarely fails to command our admiration, be the structure but imposing in dimensions—that, amid the strange confusion of four thousand voices simultaneously speaking, I seemed to distinguish all the words of this concert of giants, commenced by Charlemagne, concluded by Bonaparte. Yes, in imagination, I heard the formidable voices of the old Gothic statues intoning the *Hosanna in Excelsis.* Next came accents more shrill, but more skilful, chanting the *Veni Creator.* Other statues, with clasped hands, sang the battle-cry—religion had entered the domain of politics. Then suddenly ceased the loud war-chant, prayer checked its flight, and Voltairian doubt made heard its mocking, skeptical laugh; till finally arose the mighty voice of the Emperor Napoleon, leaning on his sword, and intoning the universal *Te Deum!*—a vast concert, into which glide all the sonorous accents of history! Then, after solemn repose, the suppressed voices resume the more majestic *Hosanna in Excelsis!* This lofty swell, ever new, ever victorious, envelops

the holy cathedral from its base to its highest pinnacle, and then all these different voices are hushed in silence, rapt in one common adoration!

THE END.